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CHALLENGE

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Anyone?*)

AUGUST 2015
RUNNERSWORLD.COM



New **13.1**
(and more!)
TRAINING PLAN

p67

15

SPORTS
BRAS
FOR EVERY
SHAPE & SIZE

SPARTANS. MUDDERS.
AMELIA BOONE HAS
RUN & WON THEM ALL

p88

FAT AND
FIT?
A RUNNER'S
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STORY





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Participants run between obstacles during a recent event near Chicago.

82 SOMETHING WILD

Wondering what it takes to do an obstacle course race? Strong legs and lungs, sure, but also great balance, a strong grip, and the upper body strength to push, pull, climb, and throw your way through miles of obstacles. Oh, and mental fortitude.

BY JOSH DEAN

62 HALF MARATHON SPECIAL MORE FUN THAN JUST 13.1

How to race, recover, and repeat at events that pair a half marathon with one (or two!) other distances in a single weekend.

BY CINDY KUZMA

70 ULTRA

Is it possible to be fat and fit? Heavy and healthy? At 250 pounds, Mirna Valerio provides an inspiring answer.

BY JOHN BRANT

92 RW TESTED REAL BRA-VADO

The latest crop of sports bras are as stylish as they are supportive. Here are our 15 wear-tested favorites.

BY KELLY BASTONE

ON THE COVER

Half Marathon Mania.....	62
Pre-Run Fuel.....	48
Post-Run Refreshers.....	52
5 Key Moves for Your Legs.....	58
Hot? Be Cool!.....	42
Rock Your Run.....	82
New 13.1 Training Plan.....	67
Sports Bras.....	92
Fit and Fat?.....	70



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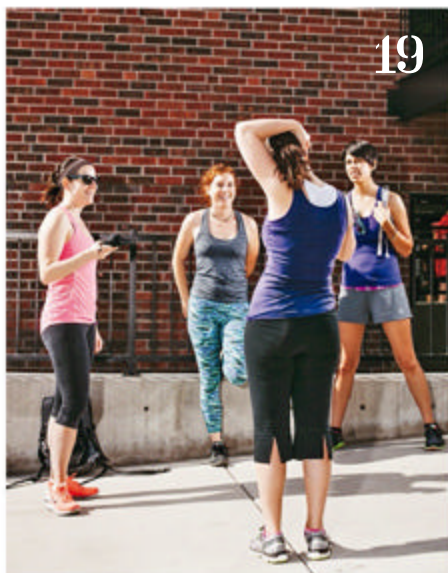
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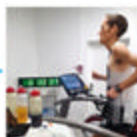
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HUMAN RACE

- 19 **Social Movement** Running up an appetite for French toast and Bloody Marys
- 22 **Street Style** Camo and mesh—this must be Brooklyn.
- 24 **Road Scholar** Woe to those who cross the Dark Gods of the Bowel. BY PETER SAGAL
- 26 **Ask Miles** How do I quiet my smug coworker?
- 28 **What Do You Know?** Alan Webb, miler turned triathlete, on mixing up your routine
- 30 **Runner by the Numbers** He averaged 6:26 pace for nearly 62 miles—on a treadmill.
- 30 **Go You!** Racing for noble causes
- 32 **Life & Times** A strange encounter helps heal a runner's heart. BY CHRIS CLAYTON
- 34 **Intersection** Culture on the run



Over the course of his attempt for the fastest treadmill 100K, Phil Anthony lost nearly nine pounds.



Approximately how many marathons would it take to reach the International Space Station?

- 5
- 8
- 12
- 20

Find the answer on page 112.

RACES+PLACES

- 99 **Victoria Marathon** Where peacocks are spectators
- 100 **Trending** Summer feast-ivals

I'M A RUNNER

- 112 **Steve Swanson** When you're a NASA astronaut, you really are tied to the treadmill.

PERSONAL BEST

TRAINING

- 40 **In Good Company** Run buddies can get you faster, stronger, and into new adventures.
- 42 **The Starting Line** Simple solutions for beating the heat
- 44 **The Fast Lane** All-out time trials can give you a mental boost—and a reality check.
- 46 **Race Prep** Plotting a goal race this fall? Time for an assessment.

FUEL

- 48 **Top Off the Morning** Early a.m. fueling strategies that will keep your workout on track
- 52 **Fridge Wisdom** Six refreshing beverages brimming with runner-friendly nutrients
- 54 **The Runner's Pantry** It's time to eat tomatoes that actually taste like tomatoes.

MIND+BODY

- 56 **Sidestep Pain** Diagnose, treat, and prevent lower-leg injuries.
- 58 **The Body Shop** Five moves to strengthen your shins, calves, and Achilles tendons

GEAR

- 60 **Staffer Stashes** RW editors share their favorite ways of toting on-the-run supplies.



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RUNNING AT
RUNNERSWORLD.COM



NEW (DIGITAL) LOOK

We gave ourselves a makeover: the brand new **runnersworld.com** features a cleaner design and simpler navigation that looks particularly great on mobile devices. Check us out!



TRAINING VIDEO

Fortify your lower legs with the strength workout on page 58, and watch a demonstration at runnersworld.com/legwork.



BUCKET LIST RACES

Which races are on your must-do-this-before-I-die list? Compare yours to ours at runnersworld.com/bucketlist.



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Where is
your personal
Rave Run?

"Badwater Basin in
Death Valley."



"Shore Path in Bar
Harbor, Maine."



"North Fork Trail in
Jefferson County,
Colorado, with
Zippy Morocco
(left) and Abbey
Road."



"Snow Canyon
State Park, Utah. I
was on vacation
near there in
October and
stopped a stranger
to snap a
Rave Run-esque
photo of me."



"The beach in
Wildwood Crest,
New Jersey."

"Marsh Creek
State Park in
Downingtown,
Pennsylvania,
especially when
joined by our
family dog,
Stewie."

Molly O'Keefe Corcoran

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Go Further

LISBON, PORTUGAL

RUNNERS

Florentin LeProvost,
Emeline Barat

THE EXPERIENCE

Bordered by pastel and graffiti-covered facades, Travessa do Sequeiro is part of a maze of steep cobblestone roads that wind through Lisbon, the “City of Seven Hills.” At dawn, this quiet street in a working-class neighborhood known for its history and vibrant nightlife is “a hidden gem” for runners, says LeProvost.

GETTING AROUND

Bisecting Travessa do Sequeiro is the Bica Funicular, a 771-foot-long railway that transports riders through the city’s alleys and central market. Built in 1892, it’s a national monument. “It was funny—we ran alongside it, and we were faster,” says Barat.

HIGH POINTS

Miradouros—“view-points” in Portuguese—sit atop each of the city’s seven peaks and provide Lisbon’s best views.

FEEL THE VIBE

Check out Alface Hall, a lively bar where you can listen to jazz from the comfort of a beanbag chair.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Scott Markewitz



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SO FAST, YOU'RE EITHER IN IT OR BEHIND IT.

These days, nobody wants to be fast. They want to be so fast. So fast, they turn wood-chip trails into forest fires and photo finishes into panoramas. So fast, they bring an entire stadium to their feet—even the seats. Well, here's some good news for anyone who wants to turn up the speed.

Olympians aren't the only runners who can benefit from ultra-responsive Nike Zoom Air. No matter what type of runner you are, no matter how fast you are or how fast you want to be, no matter whether you need stability, ample cushioning, a little of both, or little more than raw speed, there's an oh-so-fast Nike Zoom shoe waiting for you.

L TO R: NIKE AIR ZOOM ELITE 8/ NIKE AIR ZOOM VOMERO 10/ NIKE AIR ZOOM ODYSSEY/
NIKE AIR ZOOM PEGASUS 32/ NIKE AIR ZOOM STRUCTURE 18



FIND YOUR FAST AT [NIKE.COM/RUNNING](https://www.nike.com/running)

A RUNNING START



THIS MONTH, I would like to humbly but enthusiastically suggest that you get someone running. Could be anyone. Do it for his or her sake but also for your own. It's a cool feeling to get newbies started, support them along the way, answer all their wide-eyed questions, run with them when possible, and marvel down the road at how much better their health, fitness, and lives are because of it.

David Tratner is RW's Senior Director of Corporate Communications. I can't claim to have gotten him started, but I was with him during his first "real" run in 2010 and lately have been advising him as he's gotten serious after a couple years of false starts. As part of our Get Someone Running Challenge, I asked David to reflect on his "rambling running life." Here's some of what he had to say:

"When I got to *Runner's World* in 2010, I was not a runner. It's hard to start. There's an invisible barrier to entry no one tells you about. It's like the Hogwarts train platform 9¾—you know there is something on the other side, but to get there requires a leap of faith. The first mile always sucks, and that has scared away a lot of folks, including me.

"Soon after watching my first NYC Marathon at RW, I went for

my first group run. I remember the looks on everyone's faces, but also how supportive everyone was.

"In the spring of 2012, I committed. Got the right shoes, started with 20 minutes of walk/run. I was slow and lumbering but surrounded by RW voices: Jen Van Allen telling me to stay loose and roll my shoulders; Amby Burfoot saying run until you feel like walking; Bart Yasso urging me not to worry about mileage, just stay out for 20 minutes, 30 minutes. So much advice, all of it good.

"On Father's Day 2012, I ran my first 5K and broke 30 minutes. But my running dwindled. Two kids under 8 was a built-in excuse.

"I got back out there the next spring and did six miles on Father's Day. I learned that I loved running in rain. I could eat guilt-free. I dropped weight. But then days became shorter and my running hibernated again.

"On New Year's Day 2014, I committed again. Since then, I've done a bunch of 5Ks and 10Ks. My long runs have surpassed nine miles. I'm using midrun fuel. I tried frozen grapes on a Sunday run, and I didn't want to stop. They taste good.

"Now I'm nailing 9:10 miles on mile three of a tempo run. I'll be doing a half marathon in September. I'm really enjoying it. Down 15 pounds. Long runs are really interesting. I'm finding that I can feel great and horrible and content and relaxed all on the same run. I've reached the point where I know the bad stuff is going to pass—much like that first mile—so I just keep moving forward.

"As I hear you say all the time, 'Running changes everything.'"

See? For ideas on how to start someone on this endorphin ride, go to runnersworld.com/getsomeonerunning. You can also share stories and photos on social media at [#getsomeonerunning](https://twitter.com/getsomeonerunning).



Previewing the track-and-field World Champs, the July/August *Running Times* has a great profile of Olympic silver medalist Nick Willis (above), plus a roundup of key workouts that earned previous World medalists their glory.



After reading *The Better Man Project* (Rodale), I've been following a bunch of Bill Phillips's simple fixes. Example: Tilt your car's rearview mirror two inches higher. Instant result: better posture (which I later think about when I run).



If you, too, are a Quenton Cassidy geek, you must read the prequel to John L. Parker Jr.'s classic novel *Once a Runner*. It's called *Racing the Rain* (Scribner) and it evocatively reveals why Cassidy became consumed with "The Trial of Miles; Miles of Trials."



Jon Tota (right) and life-saver Jim Palmer. Far left: David Tratner, pre-10K, with his sister Allison.

IN JUNE, I wrote about Jon Tota, a fit and seemingly healthy marathoner who had a heart attack during a run in New York City's Central Park in March. Jon had a hidden heart defect that would've killed him were it not for Jim Palmer, a former EMT who happened to be running behind him. When Jon went down, Jim immediately began CPR. After spending 12 days in the hospital, Jon had surgery to repair his hidden time bomb, and in June he presented Jim with a "Heart Saver" award at a #CPR Week event in New York. In writing about Jon, I urged readers to get heart screenings regardless of how fit they are. The response was so positive that now I'm writing to encourage you to learn CPR. Only 10 percent of cardiac-arrest victims outside of a hospital survive, and CPR can triple a victim's chances. As Jon's story proves, when something befalls a runner, other runners often become first responders. I learned CPR over a decade ago and even had to administer it once. I will be getting recertified, and you can find a course near you at heart.org/cpr.

We'll be putting on a CPR clinic for runners at the RW Half & Festival in October—where Jon plans to run the 10K. "My doctors cleared me to start running again," he says. "Given everything that's happened, it seems like the perfect place to start my comeback."

DAVID WILLEY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF @DWilleyRW

THIS FLIGHT

THIS FLIGHT

OR THIS ONE

EVEN THIS FLIGHT

THIS FLIGHT

OR THIS ONE

OR THIS ONE

OR THIS ONE

OR THIS ONE

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THE INBOX

ROAD TO REDEMPTION

After 12 years in law enforcement and two years of reading RW, “The Wall” (June) is the most inspiring story I have read yet. These men made mistakes, but to hear of how they keep hope and strive to improve and support one another under such circumstances proves that rehabilitation is definitely possible.

LEE RUTLEDGE, FORT RILEY, KANSAS

I just finished reading “The Wall,” and the tears are still in my eyes. What an emotional story to read after my own humble run. Never again will I think of running as a chore, but rather as a freedom I am lucky to share with folks on both sides of the wall.

DOREEN MANNING, SHIRLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

CALLED OUT

The physical contact and threats mentioned in “The Fear Factor” (*Road Scholar*, June) made me angry. Women aren’t for men to ogle and cast their comments on. Come on, guys, we’re better than that. Have respect; don’t let chivalry die.

TIM THURLKILL, VIA EMAIL

OLD FRIENDS

Of course I recognize that picture of Jeff Galloway (*The Loop*, June)! And it’s not because I am a longtime, loyal reader who sees his column, *The Starting Line*, in every issue. No, it’s because he was my teacher, way back in the early 1970s in Raleigh, North Carolina, at Ravenscroft School. Of course, we called him Mr. Galloway then!

BETSY HOAGLUND, EVERGREEN, COLORADO

Send comments to letters@runnersworld.com. If your letter is published, you’ll receive an RW T-shirt.

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Masters records
10K, road:
27:48

5K, road:
13:40

1 mile, indoor:
3:54.91

3000 meters,
indoor:
7:37.71

Two-mile, indoor:
8:17.05

1500 meters,
outdoor:
3:41.87

THE LATEST

Bernard Lagat was one of our 2015 “Heroes of Running” (January/February) in part because of how he continually dusts competition half his age. Since turning 40 last December, he’s proven himself the master of masters running; at press time, he’d set six records. One notable mark was the world 10K road record he set at England’s Great Manchester Run in May. His time of 27:48 knocked 12 seconds off the previous top time and matched the American best (for any age), which Mark Nenow had held since 1982.



THE QUESTION

WHAT DO YOU CALL YOUR LOCAL KILLER HILL?

“The Wall of Pain.”
—Jenna Milne

“We have one called Tickle Hill. I don’t know why; I never laugh when I run up it!”
—Laurie Matecki

“Uphell.”
—Rjay Lacno

“I live in Florida. We call them ‘bridges.’”
—Marion Anderson

“Big Hill Bob, and his slightly smaller brother, Big Hill Bill. Luckily, in between is their cousin Downhill Dan. I’ve got a crush on him.”
—Robin Anderson

“The Conversation Stopper.”
—Henry Eyer

“Hillzilla.”
—Eddie Carroll

SUPPORT SYSTEMS



Check out the bras our testers loved best on page 92.

BY THE NUMBERS

A few data points behind our latest sports bra review:

Five

Criteria upon which bras were rated: support, comfort, appearance, ease of use, breathability/wicking

\$105

Spendiest model, the Falke Versatility Support Bra

49

UNIQUE MODELS REVIEWED

4

WEEKS IN THE TESTING PROCESS

\$17

Cheapest model, the Target C9 Champion

15

MADE THE CUT

TWELVE

Wear-testers who reviewed bras for this issue’s guide



THE COVER

Amelia Boone, 31, is all about getting dirty—and a bit banged up. The Chicagoan is a world champion obstacle racer who, two days before her RW cover shoot, placed 13th in a Spartan Race in Montana. “I had to get stitches due to a barbed wire snag, so I was worried about showing up with beat-up legs.” Cover photo by Peter Yang in North Bergen, New Jersey.



“I love how obstacle racing is a full-body experience,” Boone says.



Find six nutritious juice blends on page 52.

THE GALLERY

#RWREFRESH

Readers showed us how they cool off after a hot run.



—@foodandfearless

Blend strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, carrots, spinach, skim milk, and ice.



—@alyssamarie_health

Blend mangoes, peaches, strawberries, a banana, kale, coconut milk, and water. Pour into a mold and freeze.

Next month, send us scenes from the porta-potty line at a race. Tag them **#RWPottaLine**.

THE DEEP TWEET



“I’M NOW RUNNING REPEATS PAST THIS THING TO BEAT MY (LIKELY INACCURATE) HIGH SCORE. #SPEEDWORK #JUDGYMACHINE”

—@caitlingiddings, staff writer for @bicyclingmag

balega

best running socks ever

#balegacomfortchallenge

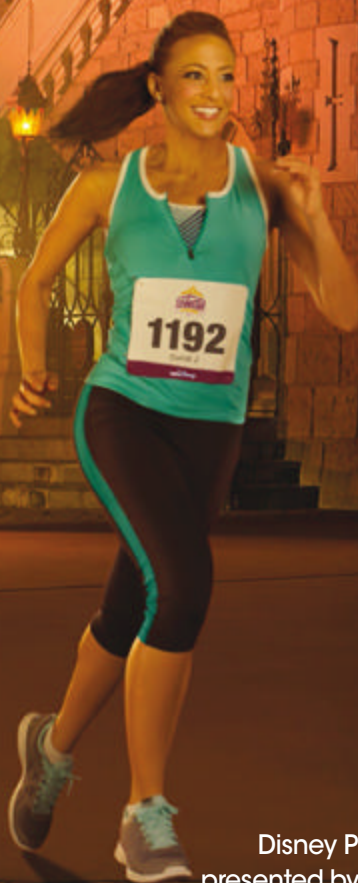
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HUMAN()RACE

NEWS, TRENDS, *and* REGULAR RUNNERS *doing* AMAZING THINGS

Cortney Logan (left) and Alex Weissner sell tickets prior to a Denver bRUNch group run (below).

SOCIAL
MOVEMENT

A RUNGRY CROWD

A running club that's all about working up an appetite

Some runs are about the journey; some are about the destination. Especially when the destination promises espresso, Bloody Marys, and French toast drizzled with maple syrup.

That's the premise of bRUNch Running, a seasonal (see "When to Brunch," page 20) Sunday morning running club that started in Denver in 2012. The group has expanded to four more cities (Phoenix; Austin, Tex.; Boulder and Fort Collins, Colo.) and is expected to reach 20 locales by the end of 2016. Runners convene at





9 a.m. at a different restaurant each week, log a 5K or 10K run, and then sit down to eat when they return.

Cofounders and best friends Alex Weissner, 29, who worked in public relations, and Cortney Logan, 31, a former paralegal, were veterans of Denver's restaurant- and brewery-based run clubs. They decided to start their own social running group and build it around their favorite postrun meal. What began as a small gathering quickly grew, and Weissner and Logan realized they could turn it into a business model.

They started partnering with locally owned restaurants, preferring ones that source ingredients from nearby farms, and selling tickets to the public (brunchrunning.com). Participants pay \$25 in advance, which helps restaurants plan staffing and space for the bRUNch



Organizers of bRUNch pick restaurants where food is locally sourced, like Linger in Denver (shown here and below).

crowd. (The commitment also helps runners resist the snooze button.) The cost covers an entrée, two drinks, tax, and tip, and a portion is donated to a local charity that supports healthy living.

Initially, the Denver group met once a month, but the meet-ups became so popular that bRUNches are now held weekly in the city, attracting 30 to 60 people every Sunday. More than 700 people have participated in at least one Denver bRUNch. The Phoenix club drew

WHEN TO BRUNCH



350 participants over its first season.

Weissner and Logan's goal is to create a nonintimidating vibe so runners of all paces and levels feel welcome. "We are a running club, but we are more about the social aspect," Weissner says. "Runners come alone or in groups with friends, and everyone's superfriendly and ready to chat."

If bRUNch Running strikes you as a little on the girly side, your instincts are correct: Weissner says 86 percent of participants are female. The group's age range is more diverse: Participants are in their 20s on up. One couple in their 70s, she says, divides their time between Denver and Phoenix and bRUNches in both cities.

"We want to create a community in which physical fitness and food play roles," Weissner says. "You can be healthy and still sometimes indulge. Living life in balance is important."

—ROBYN ROSS



MMMM, FUEL!

The Denver bRUNch Running club hosts an end-of-season race on October 11. The 5K and 10K are followed by possibly the best postrace spread around. While the 2015 event's menu is still in the works, here's a look at what runners enjoyed last year.

- Dried cherry scones
- Italian eggs Benedict
- French toast
- Breakfast burritos
- Bacon and maple cupcakes
- "Man candy" (a.k.a. candied bacon)
- Chicken and waffles sandwiches
- Oysters
- Bloody Marys
- Mimosas
- Coffee
- Craft beer



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**STREET
STYLE**

DAVE SANDS

31, ENTREPRENEUR
IN BROOKLYN

"I try to keep things easy—I wear clothes that fit well and are somewhat on-trend without thinking too much about it," says Sands, the cofounder of Grady's Cold Brew, an iced coffee concentrate brewed and bottled in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Sands isn't a competitive runner. But he's dogged and consistent, logging four to six miles three to four days a week, plus a weekend eight- to 12-miler. "On shorter runs, I try to run the opening and closing miles at a 7:30- to 8:00-mile pace, and the middle miles in the 6s. I used to get in the 5s, but I'm 31 now, and the wheels aren't what they used to be." Sounds plenty fast, but might we suggest more caffeine?

—KATIE NEITZ

"I wear a pretty badass 1980s Freestyle Shark Leash. I had this exact watch when I was 12. I'm a bit of an old man—I just time my runs, no GPS."

"This Neff hat is the dopest thing. I got the Grady's logo embroidered on it. It's great for running because it's mesh. Every two weeks, I jump into the shower with it. I'm not sure it would survive a washing machine."

"I run with my phone and listen to podcasts, like *PTI* and *Freakonomics*, and music mixes on Pandora."

"I got this tank from a thrift shop. It's mesh and says Fleet and Free. For a year, I thought I'd lost it. When I found it, I was like Tom Hanks reuniting with Wilson."

"I always wear Adidas compression shorts with white Adidas soccer shorts over them. I have five pairs of these—I'm an Adidas snob, and white goes with everything."

"I'm a free agent when it comes to shoes; I rotate brands. These Nike camo-print shoes feel and look great."

"I wear Zensah compression sleeves with Nike youth football socks. I like my calves and ankles to feel supported."

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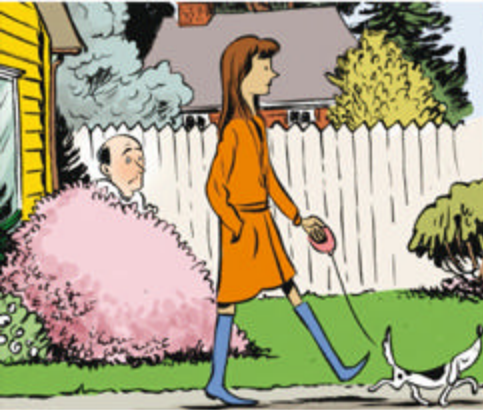
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Road Scholar

BY PETER SAGAL



THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS

The gut-wrenching woes of running with the...well, you know.

The first thing we're going to need is a euphemism. Something evocative but not gross, something original so it doesn't bring up past unpleasantness. How about "egress," a lovely antique word with the simple meaning, "to exit"? Done. ¶ When I was hit by a car in 2010 and was laid up in the hospital, I was put (blessedly) on morphine. Morphine has a lot of wonderful effects, but it often paralyzes the digestive tract. Thus, I did not egress for four or five days, although I was too blissed to care. ¶ Since my recovery, though—for almost five years—my running career has been punctuated by what some call "cramps," although those can get confused with the muscular kind. Others call it "the trots," but technically, most runners trot every now and then, especially after a speed workout. And of course there's "the runs," but that's a distressingly confusing homonym. No: This is something very particular, and something very, very hard to ignore. It is nothing so much as a specific subassembly of the bodily machinery taking over from the brain and insisting on having its own way. You may not want to stop; you may be in the midst of a race or a large group run. You may not have any place to stop. But you will stop, or you will explode. The Egress will not be denied. ¶ I have, in these five years, found myself hunkered down in bushes and alleys, hoping

I won't be discovered, arrested, or shot. I've made buddies wait up to three times during a long run while I inspect the inside of a construction site porta-potty. I blew the one chance I had to win a race—a lightly attended 5K in upstate New York—when I had to duck into the woods and find a secluded spot. While I egressed, two runners passed me.

And then, last April, despite my prayers to the Dark Gods of the Bowel, I had to abandon my companions at the Boston Marathon just two miles shy of the finish line because my lower intestine was shouting, "Attention must be paid!" Business completed, I sprang out of the porta-potty like Superman exiting a phone booth and sprinted down Commonwealth. I was less than a minute shy of catching them. Curse you, Lord Colon!

What to do? Conventional wisdom says first look at the other end of the system—what are you eating, and when are you eating it? But that seems to have nothing to do with it. It doesn't matter what I eat and when I eat it. (I never eat right before a morning run.) The other solution is to get up early, move around, and spend time egressing in the privacy of my house. I've tried it. It doesn't work. My body apparently needs me to run a mile or two before it's ready to work. I've even tried going for a mile jog and then returning home to see if I can fool my system—nothing. My body seems to know when I'm actually running and when I'm just pretending.

All this has led me to have a very strange relationship with my own digestive system, as if it's another being who happens to be occupying the same body as the rest of me. We get along in a mostly symbiotic way, ➔

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ASK MILES

He's been around the block a few times—
and he's got answers.

A coworker is very competitive. He beats me at races, then rubs it in on Monday, even though I told him I run just for fun. How do I get him to stop?

—Becky, Dallas

There's no cure for "jerk," so I recommend quitting your job and moving to another state under an assumed name. If that's not practical, I figure you have two possible routes: One, be snarky. Next time this guy gloats, stop what you're doing; do a long, slow "golf clap" and say—loudly—"Wow. You beat the noncompetitive runner in a race. That is incredible." Continue clapping until he goes away. Or two, be blunt. Tell him his behavior is obnoxious and it needs to stop. Harsh? Maybe. But sometimes "harsh" is the only way to handle "jerk."



How can I win a marathon?

—Ellie, via email

Now that's a question! I like your moxie, Ellie. In fact, you should change your name to Moxie. But on to your question. I'll assume that you're fast enough to even consider such an audacious goal. If so, you need to find a marathon small enough (think little-to-no prize money) to count out pros and nearly elite competitors. Then look up the past

few years' winning times. If they're in a range that seems reasonable given your current fitness, well, there you go. Nothing is a sure bet, of course. You never know who else will show up on race day. If all else fails, you can always run your own exclusive Ellie's 26.2 and declare yourself the winner. Good luck!

Have a question for Miles?
Email askmiles@runnersworld.com and follow [@askmiles](#) on Twitter.

→ like those birds who clean the teeth of crocodiles. But eventually we disagree. I even have conversations with my gut: Once, running along a beach in Massachusetts, it let me know it would like to make a stop. I told it not to worry, there was a public restroom up ahead. When we arrived, the restroom was locked. I told my gut it would have to wait. My gut was having none of it. I spent the next two days worried that *The Boston Globe* would run a headline, "Public Radio host found lurking in bushes, doing unspeakable things."

Clearly, it's time to bring in an expert, and I found him at Georgia Regents University in Augusta. Satish Rao, M.D., is the Professor of Medicine and Section Chief, Gastroenterology/Hepatology, and director of the Digestive Health Center, and thus, as *The Washington Post* put it, "the greatest living American expert in the field of how poop moves through the body."

In his pursuit of colonic knowledge, and specifically of how exercise affects the "motility of material" within the colon, Rao once asked healthy test subjects to exercise at up to 90 percent of capacity with probes inserted into their behinds. I assumed these were tiny things, like suppositories or maybe one of those bug-like things from *The Matrix*. "Oh, no," laughed Rao, who, perhaps as a survival technique, has maintained a sense of humor about his subject. "The colon is about three feet long! We use a three-and-a-half-foot-long tube!"

So these men and women ran, as best as they could, and Rao made a strange discovery: During intense exercise, the colon "goes quiet." "In fact," he said, "the higher the intensity of the exercise, the quieter the colon became." His hypothesis is that blood rushes away from the colon to support other systems needed in exercise—muscles, heart, lungs—and the colon, starved of energy, hibernates.

But how then to explain the common runner's complaint of "trots" and "cramps?" Those porta-potties don't line marathon routes for the comfort of the spectators. Rao doesn't know for sure, as we "don't have the technology yet" to figure it out (the

MILES ASKS



Have you ever "broken up" with a running partner?

- ▶ We just grew apart. We wanted to see other runners. We left as friends. But it was awkward. [@6dollarwheatguy](#)
- ▶ Let's just say my running partner did not like me telling him every 400m split of our long run. [@runner1899](#)
- ▶ Farmer blow gone bad. [@Itali_runs](#)
- ▶ Why would I break up with my dog?! Lol. [@MegaPlooza](#)

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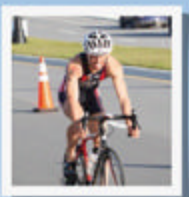
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WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

TRIPLE THREAT

Alan Webb trades the track for triathlons.

→ **Alan Webb** was once considered one of the most talented track athletes in history. In 2001, he set the American high-school mile record (3:53.43), and in 2007, he set the national mile record (3:46.91). But due to chronic injuries and plateauing race times, Webb decided to take his career in a new direction. The 32-year-old dad now has his sights on making the U.S. Olympic Triathlon Team. Here's what he's learned about mastering two new sports. —NICK WELDON

TRAIN SMART

"Triathletes are less prone to overuse injuries. But training can still wear you down. I got sick before a race in Abu Dhabi. Learn your limits."

GET A BIKE FITTING

"A proper fit has a big impact on efficiency—you want the most power using the least energy."

DOUBLE UP

"Brick workouts—combining disciplines—are key. I focus on "bike to run" because it's the most awkward transition. It's tough to run on heavy legs right off the bike."

KEEP MOVING

"Transitions are important. I came in second in a race that I may have won if I hadn't slowed on the bike going into the transition area. There has to be an urgency to finish strong in all three parts."

CHANGE QUICKLY!

"I used to take my time tying my shoes before a track meet. Now my

running shoes have elastic laces. I can slip them on in three seconds."

MAKE A LIST...

"I have a checklist of like 30 items I need for a race. The first time I packed last year, it took me 90 minutes. Now, I can do it in 30."

...CHECK IT TWICE

"Before a trip to Turkey last fall, I grabbed my daughter's passport instead of mine and missed my flight as a result."

Webb aims to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Triathlon team at the ITU World Grand Final in Chicago in September.



→ mind boggles at the thought of even bigger probes), but his guess is that after a long while of oxygen starvation, the colon might "complain" by cramping, in the same way that the sharp chest pains known as angina are caused by a lack of blood to the heart. And, he says, once exercise stops, the colon wakes up with a vengeance. So: Your colon cramps up, you stop because of the pain, and the machinery whirs back to life, sending you behind the nearest bush.

But what about me? It's no longer an occasional disaster; it's a regular part of my runs, as much as tying on my shoes or starting my watch. Rao also believes that my situation is related to my accident. His theory is that my injury—I broke two small bones in my lower back, which healed without surgery—might have affected the nerves running down to the business end of my GI tract. Which, in turn, might have affected the complex interactions that take place down there—the dance of the colon, as it were.

First, he advised trying a probiotic. More and more research shows that bacteria of the gut contribute to its well-ordered functioning, so why not go to Whole Foods and pay 20 bucks for a bottle of the stuff? (Other doctors are experimenting with fecal transplants. To which I say: NO WAY.) Perhaps that will restore my intestinal flora to the lovely garden of germs it was before the accident. If that doesn't work, he suggested I try a prescription medication to help reabsorb bile, if any extra is sloshing around in there.

Otherwise...well, where once I was a runner who pointed my nose at the horizon, now I am one who sketches a dot-to-dot around the map, from restaurant restroom (God bless you, McDonald's!) to porta-potty. There are runners who have triumphed over horrific injury, terrible diseases and disability, accidents of fate and malice. If they can keep running, so can I. I just wouldn't recommend running along with me, unless you like regular stops. 🐘

Peter Sagal is a 3:09 marathoner and the host of NPR's *Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me!* For more, go to runnersworld.com/scholar.



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Phil Anthony runs through this issue's HR logo.

RUNNER BY THE NUMBERS

PHIL ANTHONY

ULTRARUNNER, 33, CANTERBURY, U.K.

The Ph.D. student and sports science instructor at Canterbury Christ Church University made himself the subject of his own grueling lab experiment in December when he set out to break the Guinness World Record for the fastest treadmill 100K (about 62 miles). "I massively underestimated the mental effect compared with running on the road," he says. "It was so, so tough." Still, with a time of 6:40:35, Anthony crushed the 10-year-old mark—7:21:40—despite a bout of GI distress. Now that takes guts. —NICK WELDON

6:42:26

PACE PER MILE ANTHONY AVERAGED DURING THE 100K

20

Minutes faster his time could have been had he not taken a bathroom break due to a "funny tummy"

55

The longest distance, in kilometers, he'd ever run prior to the 100K record run

5,800

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF CALORIES ANTHONY BURNED DURING HIS RECORD TREADMILL RUN

£100

OR ABOUT \$156, THE BET MADE BY ANTHONY'S FIVE BROTHERS THAT HE COULDN'T BREAK 2:37 IN A MARATHON

2:16

Anthony's time in the 2012 London Marathon, his first marathon, good for 20th place



NUMBER OF GELS HE PLANS TO INGEST DURING HIS NEXT RECORD ATTEMPT: THE 50K. HE'LL SPACE THEM OUT OVER THE 31-MILE RUN TO AVOID GI ISSUES.

41

MINUTES, THE AMOUNT OF TIME HE SLICED OFF OF THE PREVIOUS RECORD

GO YOU!

Runners who inspire us



FAITH RUSSELL
Defying expectations

Russell was born with spina bifida and was never expected to walk. Today, the 9-year-old rides bikes, practices gymnastics, and does 5Ks. She's crossed 13 finish lines since taking up the sport last year. "I want to show kids that they can reach their goals," says the fourth-grader from Maryville, Tennessee. Russell lacks feeling in her feet, so she wears ankle braces and walks most of the 3.1-mile distance. But she sprints the final meters of each race. In September, her family will host the Team Faith Race for One Less 5K. —MEGAN HETZEL



BRENDAN BRUSTAD
Honoring victims one mile at a time

Over six days in May, Staff Sergeant Brustad, 29, ran 161 miles inside Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. His goal was to log one mile for every person killed in the 2011 Joplin tornado. It was part of his ongoing mission to honor the community where he's stationed. (In Oklahoma, he ran 168 miles to honor Oklahoma City bombing victims.) For his latest feat, he averaged a marathon per day, starting at 3 a.m. so he'd make his 7:30 a.m. shift. Brustad is the former world record holder for most weekly miles logged on a treadmill (461). But he says he's done chasing personal achievements. "If I run for a reason, I feel like I can do anything," he says. "That's the secret to transcending human limitation." —KIT FOX

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Life & Times

BY CHRIS CLAYTON



SEEING THINGS

One runner finds that returning to his old routine gives him a new perspective.

It was a cool fall evening around 10 o'clock, and I was slogging through a three-mile loop, not yet back to form after a long hiatus from running. I had blamed the break on my busy job and the demands of raising a young daughter, but in reality I'd stopped because my jogs became too sporadic to do me any good. Lacing up my New Balances began to feel like a chore, so I put them away. But as any lifelong runner knows, you can only avoid the road or trail for so long. Running gets under your skin and becomes a basic need. On that night in October, I needed it more than I knew. ¶ About a mile in, I turned onto a partially wooded residential street overlooking downtown St. Paul and stopped in my tracks. On the sidewalk, 10 feet from where I stood, was the largest deer I'd ever seen. He turned and faced me straight on, head upright, eyes unblinking. His coat was rust-colored, save for swatches of white around his nose and chin.

Steam curled off his massive frame, then around his antlers and into the night. ¶ Neither of us moved. It was your typical man-versus-deer staring contest in the middle of the city. After half a minute, maybe more, I blinked out of fear, and the whitetail crossed the street and walked into the woods. Though the sight of a stag gone urban was startling, I didn't think much of it until two nights later: same loop, same spot, like he was expecting me.

This time I wasn't scared. To his left, a white bungalow with a neatly trimmed lawn made the scene more absurd than threatening. I noticed things I hadn't the other night: a large scar on his chest, something almost human in his eyes. Overwhelmed by the sudden kinship I felt toward this wild creature, I choked up. When I pulled it together, he bowed his antlers—were there 10 points? 12?—and walked into the trees once more.

All was quiet. My sweat turned cold and I began to shiver, but I didn't move. A peaceful buzz had settled over me, something I hadn't felt in months.

Most miscarriages occur within the first eight weeks of pregnancy. But when ours happened on that awful morning just →

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THE INTERSECTION

Where running and culture collide



→ three months earlier, it was mid-term, which meant my wife had to deliver a small but perfectly formed boy. When the initial shock wore off, we fell into a zombie state of sadness that not even our then-3-year-old daughter could shake us from.

Eventually, the fog lifted a little and I turned again to running. My rationale: After seeing the fragility of life firsthand, I wanted to get healthy for myself and for my family. It worked, but in the way painkillers do. I'd feel good afterward, yet the ache always returned.

Cue Bambi's dad. Now, I'm not saying he healed me like some four-legged televangelist. Rather, I saw his gaze as a blessing: *Step away from the pain for a moment, then another, until it's only a whisper.*

I sought distraction during the weeks that followed. My wife and I watched bad reality TV. I cooked elaborate meals for the three of us just to get lost in the chopping, slicing, and sautéing. I spent entire afternoons as a frog, my daughter as the owner of a make-believe hotel for amphibians. And I ran. The more miles I logged, the more essential running came to feel. Each jog returned my brain to its factory settings, replacing stress and grief with a near-meditative state. It wasn't "runner's high," a term I've always thought was reductive, but something deeper, more life-affirming. Perhaps you could argue that I was avoiding grief, but I believe I was moving toward some form of acceptance and that the whitetail, in an unknowable way, had something to do with it.

Writing these words feels a bit strange because I'm not generally one to anthropomorphize or graft meaning onto seemingly random events. Yet I am certain what occurred on that quiet corner was no chance encounter—as certain as I am about running's capacity for brokering such moments.

I jogged my old loop the other day, and when I reached that handsome wooded street high above the Mississippi River Valley, I stopped and looked around. I saw buds on the birch trees. I noted the scent of lilacs in the breeze. And then I kept running. 🐾

Ten months after his encounter with the deer, writer Chris Clayton and his wife had a healthy baby boy.

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HARD AT WORK

How much do you have to run if you work at *Runner's World*? The truth is, we have a wide range of ability, desire, and commitment. Art Director Erin Benner (pink top) is targeting a sub-5:45 mile, which we know she can nail with smart training and a perfect race day. Executive Editor Tish Hamilton heads this month to the National Senior Games to run a 5K with her mother (age 87) and sister (65). Gear Editor Bryan Boyle, who recently relocated to RW HQ from the mountains of Denver (see his full beard), logs 60-plus miles per week, preferably on trails. And Associate Digital Editor Brian Dalek hopes to run a Boston-qualifying marathon while he trains his fiancée, whom he met on a group run, for her first 26.2. To see how they carry midrun supplies, turn to page 60.





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Looking to get fitter and faster and have more fun? Work out with other runners.

By Michelle Hamilton

YOU KNOW the often-touted benefits of running partners: They expect you to show up, they provide camaraderie and conversation, and they cheer you on. But exercising with other athletes offers benefits beyond accountability and support. Join one (or all) of these four group activities to run stronger, become speedier, and have more fun.

JOIN A group workout TO GET Faster

When you pace alongside others, you tend to go faster than you do alone. This phenomenon is known as “social facilitation,” and the fitness it builds is responsible for countless personal bests. “Training with others is a smart way to boost your speed,” says Dean Hebert, a running coach and mental-training expert in Arizona. “Pushing ourselves is hard, so it helps to say, ‘I’ll just stay with this person.’” The trick is doing the right workouts—specifically, those that require you to run at a challenging pace, like intervals or

tempo runs—with the right pace group. Look for a group that’s your pace or just a hair faster, and do these speedy sessions no more than twice a week.

JOIN A group fitness class TO GET Stronger

If you regularly strength-train or do yoga on your own, pat yourself on the back—and then try a class. Solo exercisers tend to do the same routine over and over, or skip the exercises they don’t like, says Heather Geyer, a physical therapist in Mystic, Connecticut. Do the former and you’ll reach a plateau. If you’re guilty of the latter, the exercises you

It’s easier to push hard when you’re with a group that runs just a tad faster than you.



Break away from a stale strength routine—and learn some new moves—by taking a class.

skip are often the ones you need most.

The best classes get you rotating your core, moving side to side, and building strength in running's primary movers (glutes, hamstrings, quads, calves) and stabilizers (glutes, core). Geyer's picks: yoga, because it works stabilizing muscles, and the body-weight program TRX, because it transforms moves like squats, lunges, and pushups into core strengtheners and balance-builders. CrossFit, boot camp, and Pilates are also good options. If you reach a point where you no longer feel challenged, ask the instructor to teach you the next level to keep making gains.

If you run two to four days a week, add strength to off days; if you run four to six days, tack it on to any

running day so you have at least one total-rest day.

JOIN A relay team

TO GET A new challenge Relay teams keep score by racking up “road kill”—the number of runners a team passes—which offers a different experience than chasing a PR. “Runners can be overly focused on time goals,” says Benny Garcia, an exercise physiologist and running coach in Chicago. “Letting go of that can leave you refreshed.”

To prepare to run three segments in 24 hours (typical of most relays), build to a long run that equals the length of your two longest legs. (So if your segments are 6.5, 4.3, and 5 miles, for example, do 11.5.) And double up. “My [relay] runners run five miles Saturday morning, five Sat-

urday night, then run long on Sunday,” says Garcia. “It develops endurance and gets you used to going out on tired legs.”

JOIN A club team

TO GET More reason to race Since joining the Impala Racing Team in San Francisco, Jodi Buyyounouski, 42, has clocked personal bests in the 5K, half marathon, and marathon. Her fast times are a result of group training and the desire to do her part for the team. “Being on a team, you enter a relationship that says, ‘I promise to give 100 percent,’” she says. The Impalas compete in USATF's Grand Prix circuit, a point system that pits regional teams against each other. The team score not only motivates runners to race hard, it gets them to race more often, too. Buyyounouski's race calendar, for example, has jumped from three events a year to 10.

You don't need to join a competitive team to reap the benefit. Some clubs, like the Triple Cities Runners Club in Binghamton, New York, create their own grand prix system with local races. And Garcia, who's a coach for Chicago's Chi City Running Club, says just being part of a group is motivation to race. His club has no formal point system, but joining has helped many of his runners discover racing. “When others are out there and it looks fun, you want to join in,” he says. 🏃



FOLLOW THE LEADER

Advice from the world's best runners

DIEGO ESTRADA, 25, of Flagstaff, Arizona, won the 2015 USA Half Marathon Championships in 1:00:51, third-fastest ever by an American on a record-quality course. He is also the 2014 USA 5K road champion.

THE START

“Before a speed workout, I run a quick 200 meters at four seconds faster than my goal pace. It makes the target workout pace feel physically and psychologically easier.”

BACKUP PLAN

“If you're not feeling so great during a workout, choose quality over quantity by staying close to goal pace and then skipping the final reps. Completing the workout shouldn't be the main goal.”

THE WORKOUT

“Try to run 12 laps with each lap one second faster than the last one, finishing at 5K goal pace. This is a fun way to practice running negative splits while staying mentally engaged.”

—BOB COOPER

FLYING SOLO When it's better to go it alone

COMING BACK FROM INJURY

Muscles and ligaments need time to adapt, and a group atmosphere can tempt you to go longer or faster than you're ready to, says Hebert.

NO ONE AT YOUR SPEED

When you run with a too-fast group, you risk injury, burnout, and the possibility of feeling discouraged, says Garcia. A too-slow group won't help you develop speed.

YOU NEED TO LEARN PACING

It's smart to log a few sessions solo to gain a sense of pace. Pay attention to how your breathing feels at your target pace; it'll help you nail your goal on race day.

YOU NEED MENTAL SPACE

Sometimes the quiet of a hard, solo effort renews your spirit. An easy solo session can help you de-stress, especially if you run somewhere scenic and serene.

THE STARTING LINE

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS FROM AN EASYGOING COACH

BY JEFF GALLOWAY



PERSPIRATION NATION

Yes, it's hot and humid, but you can still run comfortably.

➔ Summer's blooming flowers, ample daylight, and abundance of other people out exercising make it a wonderful running season. However, sunshine and heat can be uncomfortable and sometimes even dangerous for athletes. Here are some common challenges you may encounter in the coming months. Learn to deal with them to run strong—and safe—all summer long.

I get thirsty while I run.

Plan routes that pass water fountains, stash some bottles before your run, or bring your own H₂O. Several companies make products to help you tote water; ask a salesperson at your local running store which option is best for you, given how long you usually run.

My sweaty clothing rubs my skin raw.

If you wear cotton, try clothing made of sweat-wicking materials that draw moisture away from the skin. If you're still chafing, it might be caused by two areas of skin rubbing together. Apply an antichafing balm or petroleum jelly to problem spots before you head out.

Sunscreen gets in my eyes and burns.

Don't let this stop you from wearing it—apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to exposed skin before all runs between dawn and dusk. To avoid the sting, shield your forehead and eyes with sunglasses and a visor and use sunscreen only below those areas.

I'm sweating before I even start walking.

Every runner's heat tolerance varies, but many need to avoid intense activity when it's above 75 to 80 degrees. You can still exercise when it's a little warmer; just slow down 30 seconds per mile for every five-degree increase above 55.

You Asked Me Jeff answers your questions.

How can I tell if I'm having a dangerous reaction to heat?

If you're having hot or cold flashes, you've stopped sweating, or you're feeling dizzy or unable to concentrate, stop running, seek a cool environment, and get medical help.

What workouts can I do in the pool on really hot days?

Try using a flotation belt to run in the deep end. Move your legs in the same range of motion, and replicate the effort you'd be expending if you were doing the same workout on solid ground.

Fact or Fiction As long as I go slow enough, I can run outdoors no matter how hot it is.

FICTION

Heat can be dangerous and is a leading cause of serious medical problems and deaths in races. Even when running slowly but continuously on hot days, you risk heat illness, which can be reduced (but not eliminated) by frequent walk breaks. Have an indoor exercise option so you don't have to miss workouts due to heat.



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Solo time trials build mental toughness, but chasing a pacer may help you push harder.

RACE YOURSELF

Test your fitness (and build some) with a time trial.



A week before his legendary race, Roger Bannister ran a three-quarter-mile time trial: “I felt that 2:59.9 for the three-quarter mile in a solo training run meant 3:59.9 in a mile race,” he recalled. He ran exactly 2:59.9, giving him the confidence he needed to break four minutes. While coaches often warn their runners not to race in practice to avoid burnout, an occasional all-out time trial can be useful as a mental boost, a training stimulus, or a reality check. Here are three ways to try it yourself:

DRESS REHEARSAL

Racing at PR pace is a trip into the unknown, but a well-executed time trial blazes a path for most of the route. Simulate race conditions: Wear racing shoes and clothes, run at the same time of day on similar terrain, and do your usual prerace warmup.

Dress rehearsals work best before races of up to 10K. Aim to cover between half and three-quarters of your race distance (with shorter relative distances for longer races, e.g. 75 percent of a mile, 50 percent of a 10K) at goal race pace, one to four weeks before the race. The danger is that

you’ll find the time trial so hard that you won’t be able to imagine holding the pace longer. Remember that race-day nerves, spectators, and competitors will unlock reserves that a time trial can’t access. That said, if you’re more than five percent off goal pace, consider revising your race goal.

SPEED TEST

If you’re preparing for a longer race (10K to marathon), time trials at shorter distances are a painful but efficient way of maintaining speed. Low-key road races work too, but time trials require no entry fee, and you can pick the date that works best. For marathoners and half marathoners, aim for between 5K and five miles; if you’re prepar-

ing for a 10K, you can go as short as a mile. Include one or two speed tests in a buildup, with the last at least two weeks prerace.

Unlike a dress rehearsal, the goal isn’t to maintain a particular pace—it’s to suffer in a way you don’t during regular longer-distance training.

Fighting through the symptoms of anaerobic fatigue will help train your body to handle slower paces more efficiently. To maximize the effect, err on the side of starting aggressively—at least two percent faster than your best recent time at that distance.

STIMULUS PACKAGE

Time trials exist in a gray zone between workouts and races, and the distinction is blurriest when you add a time trial to a larger interval workout. For example, to prepare for a 5K, you might run a mile time trial, recover for 10 to 15 minutes, then do a ladder of 1200, 800, 600, and 400 with 2:00 rest, starting at 5K pace and getting faster. The extra volume will stimulate more fitness gains than a speed test, but it requires more recovery—schedule it three to four weeks before your race.

The time trial should still be run all-out, so try to forget about the rest of the workout until you’re finished, and be flexible about the pacing and number of reps—don’t give yourself excuses to save energy. A time trial isn’t a race, but it should feel like one. 🏃



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RACE PREP

ALL SET TO GO?

How to tell if you're really ready to begin training in earnest for a fall event

By Lisa Jung

ALTHOUGH THE CALENDAR may say it's time to start training for your September, October, or November goal race, selecting a plan based on your current mileage and goal distance shouldn't be your first step. "Before you choose and dive into a training plan, it's important to assess your health, your drive, and what you're hoping to get out of the race," says Nick Arciniaga, elite marathoner and Team RUN Flagstaff coach. If your body and mind aren't ready to train, you won't enjoy yourself or reach your full potential. Here's how to evaluate your readiness in key areas before you kick off a new training cycle.



ARE YOU HEALTHY?

Go for an easy run and pay close attention to see if any physical issues pop up, especially aches or pains near the site of a prior injury. If they do, work on rehab—strength-training, massage, or seeing a doctor—and **wait until you can run pain-free to begin a plan.** "When you start training for a big race, you want to make sure you're going into it 100 percent healthy," says Arciniaga. "Otherwise, odds are you won't make it to race day ready to run."

If you have a history of injury, get back in the routine of taking care of your problem area(s), whether that means foam-rolling, strength-training, or stretching. "You want to ensure that the injury doesn't flare up," says Arciniaga.

Make sure your running shoes are in good condition. Most last 300 to 400 miles; if you haven't kept track, check the soles for overly worn areas or visit a specialty store to try on a new pair. If those feel considerably springier or more comfortable than your current shoes, the old pair may be ready for retirement.



ARE YOU MOTIVATED?

Just because you've already signed up for a fall race doesn't mean you're mentally ready for the challenge. "Many runners register for races simply because they always do a fall race, their friends are doing one, or they have much of their identity wrapped up in race results," says Doug Jowdy, Ph.D., a sports psychologist in Boulder and Denver, Colorado.

Jowdy recommends asking yourself, **"Why am I running this race?"** If the answer is primarily "for fun"—that is, any nervousness feels more like excitement than dread—then you're good.

But if you feel like you "have to" or you "should" race, for whatever reason, then it's time to reassess. Cancel your plans—better to lose some cash than to drag through an uninspired training cycle. Jowdy recommends swapping out some runs for riding a bike, going for a hike, or playing a team sport. "The idea is to engage in activities that are absolutely fun for you," he says. "When you can't wait to run again for enjoyment, you can start training for a race."



WHAT'S YOUR GOAL?

If you have your sights set on a PR or a certain finishing time, choose a training plan that doesn't increase your current total weekly mileage by more than 10 percent per week and that guides you through workouts with paces that correlate to your time goal. If the race distance is longer than you've gone before and you're hoping just to finish, Arciniaga says to build up your long runs every other week so that your longest run is 75 percent the mileage of race day.

Set at least one goal that's not a number. Perhaps to do a negative split (that is, to run the second half of the race faster than the first): Do progression runs—where you start at a slower pace and finish at race pace—to teach your body how to finish fast. If your goal is to be competitive in your age group, train your brain to stay strong. "Part of that comes in daily training," says Arciniaga. "Work on being positive and not letting a tough patch in training (or racing) take over." And if your race goal is to have an enjoyable experience and finish smiling, that's great, too.

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ONE SERVING OF FRUIT

Bananas—high in potassium and low in fiber—are good standbys. A small one provides about 23 grams of carbs—perfect just before a run. An apple or handful of blueberries works well, too.

LIQUID CARBS

"You can get the prerun carbs you need from liquid sources," says Bonci. "Juice, sports drink, or even Jell-O can be great." Or try a nutritional shake (Boost or Ensure) for quick energy.

A SERVING OF CEREAL A $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving of Wheaties provides 22 grams of carbs and just three grams of fiber. "Choose cereal with five grams of fiber or less," says Tara Gidus, R.D., nutritionist for the RunDisney race series. And skip the milk if you'll start running in 30 minutes or sooner.

you plan to run, and how well you tolerate exercising on a full (or partially full) tank. That last one you'll have to figure out through a bit of trial and error; for the first two, use these rules as your guide.

YOU HAVE ABOUT 30 MINUTES BEFORE YOU RUN

Snoozed through your alarm? Before heading out the door, eat about 25 grams of carbs, says Davis. Try a small banana, a serving of dry cereal, or even a Jell-O cup. Any more than that and some runners will risk gastrointestinal distress. "Think of it as a preworkout snack," says Davis. "If you're running for less than an hour, this plus water is probably all you'll need."

For longer runs, try to wake up a bit earlier. "If you're planning a 20-miler, you want at least an hour to fuel up, use the bathroom, and settle your stomach," says Leslie Bonci, M.P.H., R.D., director of sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and coauthor of *Run Your Butt Off*. If that doesn't happen, don't cram in a larger meal. Instead, have that same preworkout snack, and supplement it with a sports drink, gel, or gummies every 30 to 45 minutes midrun. "It's best to start with a manageable amount," says Bonci, "and refuel as you burn through that." ➔

TOP OFF THE MORNING

What you eat before an early run can make or break your workout.

By Amanda MacMillan

YOU MAY NOT LOVE GETTING UP EARLY, but mornings are often the best time to run—especially during the summer. And since races usually start in the a.m., most runners have to run early, at least once in a while. But it can be hard to fuel up properly: Pack in too much and you'll risk stomach problems. Eat too little and you could bonk a few miles in.

"You've been fasting and dehydrating all night," says Kate Davis, M.S., R.D., sports dietitian and owner of RD Kate Sports Nutrition in Naperville, Illinois. "It's important to find some way to replenish before doing anything that requires a lot of energy." How exactly you do that depends on a few things: how much time you have, how long

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YOU HAVE ABOUT 60 MINUTES BEFORE YOU RUN

Now's the time to fill up with a more substantial breakfast containing about 50 grams of carbohydrates and about 300 to 400 calories (see the options at right). "With that much time to kill beforehand, you're bound to get hungry early in your run if you don't eat something substantial," says Davis. Aim for a fist-size serving of food, says Bonci. Carbs are still key, especially for shorter runs; toast with honey or jam, a pancake or waffle, or a bowl of oatmeal are all safe bets.

If you're fueling for a longer run, though, adding protein—like two tablespoons of peanut butter, a glass of milk, or a hard-boiled egg—will help sustain your energy. Think beyond typical breakfast foods, too: "I know runners who have great success with cold pizza or warmed-up rice with chicken broth or soy sauce in the mornings," says Bonci.



PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA SANDWICH "You don't want a huge amount of bread weighing you down, but two pieces of toast or half a bagel paired with some protein should work well," says Davis.

OATMEAL WITH...bacon! A cup and a half of oatmeal packs 48 grams of carbs—perfect when you've got plenty of time to digest. For a protein boost, add half a slice of bacon or a thin slice or two of ham. In small amounts and with time to digest, these higher-fat toppings can work, says Bonci.



ENERGY BAR Don't want to cook? Look for bars with about 50 grams of carbs, five to 10 grams of protein, and less than five grams of fiber, says Gidus.

A.M. FAQs
Your morning-run questions answered

What should I drink?

As soon as you get up, drink eight to 16 ounces of water. "Not only does your body really need that rehydration," says Davis, "but drinking water will also help wake you up and get your digestion moving." It may even whet your appetite and encourage you to eat.

Must I eat something?

If you're running easy for 45 minutes or less, water may be enough. "Some research suggests running after fasting may improve fat burning," says Davis. For anything longer or more intense, you need carbs to burn; otherwise, says Bonci, your body may break down muscle for fuel.

What about fueling up the night before?

Carb-loading the night before a big run will give you a little extra fuel in your tank, but not enough to skip breakfast. "Overnight, most of those calories will be burned or stored as fat, so you'll still be low on fuel the next morning," says Gidus.

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SPLendor IN THE GLASS

Tasty, refreshing, and full of runner-friendly nutrients

TOMATO-PAPAYA REFRESHER

This combo is rich in vitamin C, which helps promote healthy cartilage, and potassium, a key electrolyte.

- 1 cup tomato juice
- 3 papaya nectar ice cubes (see “Nice Ice,” below)
- 3 slices seeded jalapeño
- 1 wedge lime
- 1 wedge lemon
- 1 stalk celery with leaves

In a glass jar, pour the tomato juice over the nectar ice cubes. Add jalapeño and squeeze in lime and lemon. Stir with the celery.

TART CHERRY JUICE AND LIME

Tart cherry juice supplies a wealth of antioxidants that help stave off soreness and boost recovery after hard runs.

- 2 lime juice ice cubes
- 1 cup tart cherry juice
- 1 sprig mint

In a tall glass, add the lime juice ice cubes and cherry juice. Garnish with the mint. Allow ice to melt for a few minutes before drinking.

Tomato-Papaya Refresher

Tart Cherry Juice and Lime

In just an hour of running you can lose between one and two liters of body fluid.

Ginger-Mint Lemon-Limeade

NICE ICE

Chill out with flavorful DIY cubes.

LEMON OR LIME JUICE ICE CUBES
Use unsweetened juice and add honey or agave syrup. Pour into molds and freeze.

PINEAPPLE OR APPLE JUICE ICE CUBES
These juices don't require adding sugar. Store in freezer bags for up to three months.

PAPAYA OR PEACH NECTAR ICE CUBES
Look for cans in the Latin section of the grocery store. Use to flavor sparkling water.



GINGER-MINT LEMON-LIMEADE

This sweet-tart combo will energize your muscles prerun with a hit of carbs.

- 1/4 cup mint leaves
- 1" piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 2 lemon ice cubes
- 2 lime ice cubes
- 1/2 cup lemonade
- Lemon slices

In a tall glass, muddle the mint and ginger. In a shaker, combine lemon and lime ice cubes and lemonade; shake well. Pour in the glass. Garnish with lemon slices.

PEACH-MELON COOLER

Summer fruits pack a dose of prerun carbs along with an array of antioxidants.

- 2 peach nectar ice cubes
- 1 lime ice cube
- 1/2 cup diced honeydew
- 1/2 cup diced peach
- 1/2 cup sparkling water
- 2 Tbsp. blueberries
- Sprinkle of ground cinnamon

In a shaker, combine peach ice cubes, lime ice cube, honeydew, peach, and water. Lightly shake. Pour in a glass over blueberries. Top with cinnamon. Allow the ice to melt slightly.

SUPER BERRY SLUSHY

Aronia berries (often sold in the freezer aisle) are packed with anthocyanins known to protect muscles and other body cells from oxidative damage.

- 1/2 cup sparkling water
- 1/4 cup frozen strawberries
- 1/4 cup frozen blueberries
- 1/4 cup frozen aronia berries
- 1 teaspoon dark honey

In a blender, combine the water, strawberries, blueberries, aronia berries, and honey. Blend until slushy.

WATERMELON- BASIL COOLER

A perfect postrun remedy, this drink is rich in skin-protecting lycopene and rosmarinic acid, an anti-inflammatory compound in basil.

- 2 cups cubed watermelon
- 3 to 5 basil leaves
- 3 lemon ice cubes

Freeze the watermelon for 30 minutes, or until semi-frozen. In a blender, mix the watermelon, basil, and ice cubes. Blend until combined.

Tempted to add a splash of booze? Hold off until you've had a chance to fully rehydrate.

Peach-Melon Cooler

Super Berry Slushy

Watermelon-Basil Cooler



THE RUNNER'S PANTRY

TOMATO CRAZY

Cookbook author and runner
Patricia Wells has a weakness for them.

"EACH YEAR, I can't wait for juicy garden-fresh tomatoes," says Patricia Wells, who teaches cooking classes in Provence and Paris. "One year I went crazy and had 82 tomato plants in my garden!" All tomatoes contain vitamin C, but red, orange, yellow, and purple varieties also provide lycopene, which may protect against stomach, prostate, and lung cancers. For more, see patriciawells.com. —YISHANE LEE

Pair tomatoes with a little bit of fat from olive oil to boost lycopene absorption.

CHILLED SOUP "I like to sip this after morning runs."

- 1½ pounds yellow heirloom tomatoes, quartered
- ¾ cup mild extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup water
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt

In a blender, combine all the ingredients. Blend on medium for 3 minutes to create a thick emulsion. Chill before serving. Serves 6.

HEIRLOOM PLATE "This is a favorite dish topped with an avalanche of herbs and cheese."

- 1½ pounds multi-colored heirloom tomatoes, sliced
- 6 thin slices of Comte or Gruyère
- Handful of fresh basil and oregano leaves
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon sea salt flakes

Overlap the tomato slices on a platter. Garnish with the cheese and herbs. In a jar, combine the oil and lemon juice. Shake well. Drizzle over the platter. Season with the salt. Serves 6.



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THE BODY SHOP

SIDESTEP PAIN

A top sports doc explains how to treat and prevent the most common lower-leg injuries.

By Jordan Metzl, M.D.

IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT lower leg pain is a common complaint of the runners I treat when you consider the key role these muscles, tendons, and bones play in running. The calf and Achilles tendon work together to generate the force that pushes you off the ground with each step. All while the shin bone helps to absorb and dissipate the impact of every footfall. When these areas are weak, tight, or overworked, they become vulnerable to injury. Here's how to keep them in top shape.

1234

CALF STRAIN

What's Going On?

This occurs when tight or weak gastrocnemius or soleus muscles aren't ready for the explosive effort required to push your body off the ground.

TREAT IT

- ▶ **Don't run.**
- ▶ **Ice for 15 minutes five times a day.**
- ▶ **Wear a compression sleeve for the first 48 hours postinjury.**
- ▶ **Elevate your lower leg above your hip during the first 48 hours.**
- ▶ **Anti-inflammatory meds could help.**
- ▶ **Symptoms don't improve? See a doctor.**

PREVENT IT

- ▶ **Foam roll and stretch your calves daily.**
- ▶ **Strength-train (see page 58).**

1234

SHIN SPLINTS

What's Going On?

Different types of shin pain all fall under this catchall term. Most shin splints occur when there is more stress on the tibia than it can handle.

TREAT IT

- ▶ **Reduce mileage and cross-train.**
- ▶ **Apply ice for 15 minutes five times a day.**
- ▶ **Overpronate? Con-**

sider arch supports.

- ▶ **If the pain doesn't subside with rest, stop running and see a doctor to rule out a stress fracture (see #3).**

PREVENT IT

- ▶ **Increase mileage gradually.**
- ▶ **Strength-train, targeting your glutes and core to reduce the load on your shins (runnersworld.com/ironstrength).**
- ▶ **Shorten your stride.**
- ▶ **Get enough calcium and vitamin D.**



Where Does It Hurt?

Discomfort in your calf—anything from a twinge and tightness to a blast of sharp, excruciating pain.

DIAGNOSIS ▶ **CALF STRAIN (1)**



Adapted from *Running Strong: The Sports Doctor's Complete Guide to Injury-Free Running for Life*, by Jordan Metzl, M.D. (Rodale). This book contains Blippar technology, which enables you to see exclusive videos.

1234

STRESS FRACTURE

What's Going On?

Develops over time when the demand on the bone exceeds the bone's ability to withstand the force.

TREAT IT

- **Get medical care.**
- **Avoid activities that put weight on your leg.**
- **Get enough calcium and vitamin D.**

PREVENT IT

- **Up mileage gradually.**
- **Overpronation can contribute; make sure you are in the right running shoes.**
- **Strength-train, targeting glutes and core.**
- **Shorten your stride and increase your cadence to put less stress on your shins.**

Where Does It Hurt?

Tenderness or achiness along your shin.

DIAGNOSIS ► **SHIN SPLINTS (2) OR STRESS FRACTURE (3)**

Where Does It Hurt?

Mild to severe soreness along the Achilles tendon, which runs from your heel to your calf.

DIAGNOSIS ► **ACHILLES TENDINITIS (4)**

1234

ACHILLES TENDINITIS

What's Going On?

Overuse injury from ramping up mileage or intensity too quickly. Weak or tight calves increase the risk.

TREAT IT

- **Don't run. Swim, bike, pool-run.**
- **Ice for 15 minutes five times a day.**
- **Foam roll and strength-train your calves (see page 58).**
- **See a doctor if there's a lump in the tendon (sign of a tear).**

PREVENT IT

- **Do plyometric exercises (see page 58).**
- **Foam roll calves daily.**
- **Increase mileage gradually.**

HOW TO BLIPP THIS ARTICLE



DOWNLOAD
BLIPP APP



FILL SCREEN
WITH PAGE 56,
THEN PAGE 57



SEE IT COME
TO LIFE

DO THE LEG WORK

Jordan Metzl's simple strength plan will keep your shins, calves, and Achilles healthy.

YOU LOVE RUNNING. And when your sport of choice involves the great outdoors, fresh air, and cruisin' down the road, you don't want to be stuck inside doing strength exercises. I get that. I'm a runner, too. But I also want to run for the rest of my life. So I strength-train two or three times a week. Running can create muscle imbalances or accentuate ones you already

have. Weak calves, for example, can put too much stress on the Achilles and break down the fibers that make up the tendon. Instable hip and core muscles hurt your biomechanics and overload your shins, which can lead to shin splints and stress fractures. Do these exercises twice a week—daily if you have had shin, calf, or Achilles issues in the past.

PLYOMETRIC LUNGES

Lunge forward with your right foot and left arm until the shin of your back leg is parallel to the floor and your knee almost touches the ground. Push up off the ground in an explosive manner, and switch your legs in midair so you land in a lunge with your left leg forward. Left and right lunges count as one rep. Do three sets of 15 reps.



STRAIGHT-LEG CALF RAISE

Hold a dumbbell in your right hand; stand on a step. Cross your left foot behind your right ankle. Balance on the ball of your right foot. Lift your right heel and pause; then lower. Do three sets of 15 reps on each side.



BENT-KNEE CALF RAISE

Follow the straight-leg calf raise instructions, but bend the knee of your balancing leg and keep it bent as you raise and lower your body. Do three sets of 15 reps on each side.



ECCENTRIC CALF RAISES

Stand on a step with your heels hanging off the edge. Push yourself up on your toes. Then very slowly (to a count of 10) drop your heels below the level of the step. Do three sets of 15 reps.



FARMER'S WALK ON TOES

Hold heavy dumbbells at your sides. Rise up on your toes and walk forward for 60 seconds. If you feel that you could've gone longer than 60 seconds, increase the weight. Do three sets.



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- RACE PREP
- ACTIVE RECOVERY
- CROSS TRAINING



connect IQ[™]
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Runners can now sync their outdoor and indoor workouts together with select Garmin smart watches.

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OLYMPIANS USE ZERO RUNNER

“You don’t have to be an Olympian to train like one. The Zero Runner is authentic running. Now I train smarter.”

Carrie Tollefson

Olympian • Mom • National Running Champion

“The Zero Runner is an amazing tool and the perfect workout to complement running. I have tried endless different types of equipment, but the Zero Runner is the closest to actual running that I have ever experienced. It is helping me get stronger and faster without adding unnecessary stress to my legs.”



Kara Goucher

Two-Time Olympian • Mom • National Running Champion



see it move: zerorunner.com

STAFFER STASHES

How the RW crew carries fuel supplies on the run



BRYAN BOYLE
RW Gear Editor

1 / ULTIMATE DIRECTION SJ ULTRA VEST 2.0

Trail and ultra runners particularly appreciate vests, which situate water bottles on the chest. This vest is one in a UD series—including a women-specific version—that sets bottles up front with pockets and pouches aplenty, including room for a 70-ounce bladder (sold separately). **\$130**

“Glukos Energy Gel is less viscous than most gels. No chasing with water. Less mess.”
One box with 12 packets: \$24



TISH HAMILTON
RW Executive Editor

3 / ORIGINAL SPIBELT

SPI stands for “small personal item” in this sleek belt that secures by buckle and holds the essentials in a small expandable pocket: fuel, ID, keys, cash, smartphone. Upgrade to the Large Pocket SPIbelt to fit an iPhone 6. For \$10, you can keep stuff extra dry with a waterproof inner liner. **\$20**

“UnTapped maple syrup packets are a genius midrun alternative to traditional gels.”
One box with 20 packets: \$35



ERIN BENNER
RW Art Director

2 / HYDRAFORM ERGO-LITE ULTRA HANDHELD

The pocket on this 16-ounce insulated handheld is big enough for your smartphone, which can be separated by a divider from fuel, ID, etc. Additional gel slots are on the handle. Nozzle requires no handling; just sip, no drip. Curved shape to the bottle allows a more natural position for a hand to rest than with traditional water bottles. **\$28**

“Clif Shot Bloks taste good! They have caffeine! They aren’t messy! The ideal energy chew.”
One box with 18 packets: \$36



BRIAN DALEK
RW Associate Digital Editor

4 / 2XU XTRM SHORT WITH COMPRESSION

There is abundant storage in these shorts that are designed for long runs and self-sufficiency. Use the zippered front pocket, the zippered back pocket, two mesh side pockets, two rear belt loops for gels, and a front pocket on the compression liner that is ideally suited for stuffing your small trash until arriving at the next aid station. **\$110**

“A few Haribo Gold-Bears keep my fuel level high during hard, long workouts or marathons.”
One 2-ounce bag: \$1

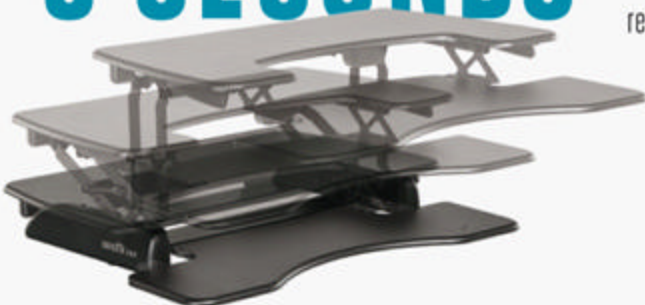


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HALF MARATHONS
ARE MORE POPULAR
THAN EVER—AND
MORE EXCITING, TOO, WITH
THE OPTION TO COLLECT
MULTI-RACE BLING ALL
IN THE SAME WEEKEND.
BUT YOU'LL WANT TO
TRAIN FOR THAT.

MORE FUN



BY CINDY
KUZMA
ILLUSTRATIONS
BY MARK
MATCHO

THAN **JUST 13.1**



The I-35 offers a half marathon in Missouri on Saturday and another half in Iowa on Sunday. Doesn't that sound like fun?



FOR YEARS, runners who wanted to complete both the Gasparilla Distance Classic 15K and the Hops Marathon in Tampa, Florida, had plenty of time to rest up in between. After all, one race took place in December, the other in February. But in 2003, race organizers merged the two weekends and issued runners a triple-dog-dare: Finish three races in one weekend (a 5K and 15K on Saturday, the marathon on Sunday) and earn a special medal and finisher's jacket, not to mention extraordinary bragging rights. The next year, a half marathon joined the mix to give runners a different (and slightly more doable) three-peat option: 5K, 15K, half marathon. ¶ Gasparilla may have been the first to combine the popular half marathon with shorter races into one fun-packed weekend. Four years later, Bermuda followed suit, when race organizers noticed that most people signing up for the island's Sunday half marathon also ran the Invitational Mile on Friday, the 10K on Saturday, or both. "We wanted to give people more value for their

dollar—they're coming all this way, so why not encourage them to run more than once?" says race director Anthony Raynor. In 2008, the Bermuda Triangle Challenge was born.

Challenges, double races, festivals—by any name, race organizers increasingly offer events that pack a 5K, a 10K (or sometimes both) plus a half marathon into one weekend (or even one day). Eight such events run through Disney theme parks alone; 12 out of 29 Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathons now offer a combo Remix Challenge; and Yu-KanRun, north of Boston, offers six different chances to conquer a half marathon and another race (or two) in the very same day. And, of course, there's our very own Runner's World Half & Festival, held this year from October 16 to 18, which gives brave runners a Hat Trick option (a 5K and 10K Saturday plus the half marathon Sunday), with plenty of seminars and celebration in between.

Those community events served as the main attraction for Amy Dedic, 34, of Flourtown, Pennsylvania, and her husband, who ran our inaugural Hat Trick in 2012. "We knew this would be a big challenge as we both had only run a handful of races up to this point and only one full marathon," she says. "We were hoping to finish all three races and just have a lot of fun over the weekend." Mission accomplished—they're coming back for the fourth time.

"These races are about the experience more than how fast you're running," says Jessica Green, co-founder and coach at Hot Bird Running in Portland, Oregon. With a little advance planning and smart preparation, you can set a PR for most racing enjoyment in a single weekend.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Running a half marathon challenge close to home has its advantages—fewer hotel expenses and no jet lag, to name two. But you'll often have to rack up a few miles just getting to your race locale. To make travel as stress-free as possible:

Take Your Time

Green suggests taking an extra day off work for travel; if the first race is on Saturday, arrive Thursday night or Friday morning at the latest to get your bearings and prepare. And keep in mind you'll be more tired than usual heading home—from both the extra running and the multiple days of earlier-than-normal wake-up calls (Disney races, for instance, often start at 5:30 a.m.).

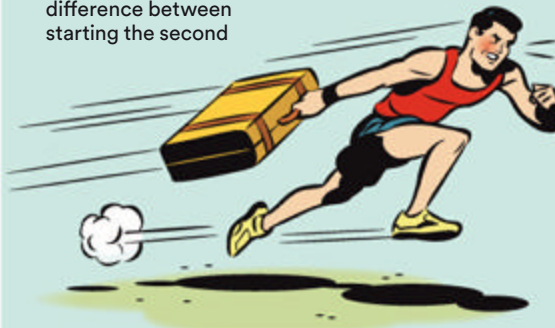
Scope It Out

Place a higher priority on accommodations close to the start or finish lines, since you'll be hauling back and forth more frequently. Plan when and where you'll eat and drink before and between the races. Nailing down logistics relieves anxiety and makes the difference between starting the second

race recovered and ready versus stressed and starving.

Forget Nothing

Check the weather carefully and double up on race gear for any possible conditions. That means two rain jackets, two tanks, two long-sleeved shirts—and yes, two pairs of shoes. Sure, they'll air out overnight, but a rainstorm or a misplaced puddle could spell disaster. "You want to be comfortable, but you also don't want to introduce chafing from dirty or wet gear," says Joe English, a national coach to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training. As with any race trip, pack your most essential items into a small carry-on to sidestep lost-luggage stress.



WHERE TO TAKE ON TWO OR MORE DISTANCES IN ONE WEEKEND



ROCK 'N' ROLL VIRGINIA BEACH REMIX CHALLENGE

September 5–6, 2015, Virginia Beach, VA One-mile beach run (Saturday) + half marathon (Sunday) **THE SWAG** Challenge medal—and a beach towel instead of a shirt for Saturday's run. **THE BONUS** Not tired yet? More fun is nearby. Your bib number grants you entry to the American Music Festival held all weekend. runrocknroll.com



RUNNER'S WORLD HALF MARATHON & FESTIVAL HAT TRICK

October 16–18, 2015, Bethlehem, PA 5K and 10K (Saturday) + half marathon (Sunday) **THE SWAG** A race shirt, a medal for each race (the one for the half doubles as a bottle-opener), and a Hat Trick running hat **THE BONUS** Hang out with RW staffers at seminars, at book signings, and on the roads of the Lehigh Valley. rwhalf.com

If you're going all the way to Bermuda, you might as well run a mile, a 10K, and a half marathon. Right?



KNOW YOUR GOALS

Success at multidistance events starts with realistic expectations. Most runners will have a hard time running their fastest in two (or more) events, so if you'd like to emerge with a speedy time, designate one distance as the priority and the other race (or two) as an easier effort, says Tamara Ogle, head

coach at Fort Worth Running Company. Runners in her programs often use this strategy for the city's Cowtown Challenge, which involves a 5K or 10K on Saturday and a half marathon (or marathon, or 50K ultra) on Sunday. Regardless of what you choose, write down your plan. Here's how to make your goals happen.

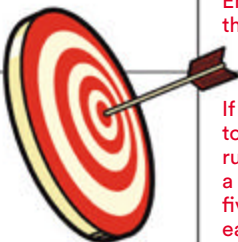
YOUR GOAL

YOUR STRATEGY

A FAST (FOR YOU) HALF MARATHON

Either run the shorter distance(s) as an easy warmup or run the first third slow and the last two-thirds at goal half marathon pace. Avoid going out too fast, or you'll pay with extra fatigue and soreness, says coach English. If the half comes first (it rarely does), race it, then treat the short distance(s) as a recovery run.

A FAST (FOR YOU) 5K OR 10K



If the 5K or 10K comes first, race it, then run the half at least 30 to 60 seconds per mile slower than you would otherwise. If you're running the half first, you'll find it much harder to nail a time goal in a short distance after that. Run the half at an easy pace, but insert five to eight speed bursts in the later miles, recovering at a slow, easy jog for one to two minutes in between, says coach Green.

SOMEWHAT FAST (FOR YOU) FINISHES IN ALL RACES

Pick achievable, round numbers slower than your best times for each race, says Atlanta-based coach Carl Leivers.

THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF FUN IN A SINGLE WEEKEND

Think about what would make the race day most memorable and plot a way to make it happen, whether that's stopping to snap a selfie at each mile, high-fiving as many kids as you can reach, or trying to meet another runner from every state along the route, English says.



I-35 CHALLENGE

October 17–18, 2015, Kansas City, MO, and Des Moines, IA

Kansas City Half Marathon (Saturday) and Des Moines Half Marathon (Sunday)

THE SWAG Special bibs for each race, plus an I-35 Challenge shirt and medal

THE SCENE These cities, three hours apart down (you guessed it) Interstate 35, teamed up so you can squeeze two half marathons into a single weekend. Both locations also offer full marathons.

desmoinesmarathon.com



BERMUDA TRIANGLE CHALLENGE

January 15–17, 2016, Hamilton, Bermuda Invitational Mile (Friday night) + 10K (Saturday) + half marathon (Sunday)

THE SWAG Challenge medal and shirt

THE SCENE With weather "cool enough to run, warm enough to have fun"—race morning usually starts in the 60s—you'll travel along both the south and north coasts of the island, through quaint pastel villages and abundant flowers. bermudaraceweekend.com

TRAINING PLAN FOR A HALF (AND POSSIBLY MORE)



Atlanta coach Carl Leivers developed this plan to teach your body to perform when tired. Your base should be 3 to 5 miles, 3 to 4 times a week for 3 months.

START TRAINING

CHICAGO 9/27

START TRAINING 7/6

RW FESTIVAL

BETHLEHEM, PA 10/18

START TRAINING 7/27

ROCK 'N' ROLL

PHILADELPHIA 10/31

START TRAINING 8/10

DISNEY WINE
& DINE

ORLANDO, FL 11/7

START TRAINING 8/17

ROCK 'N' ROLL

SAVANNAH, GA 11/7

START TRAINING 8/17

DISNEY AVENGERS


ANAHEIM, CA 11/15

START TRAINING 8/24

ROCK 'N' ROLL

SAN ANTONIO 12/6

START TRAINING 9/14

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 2 strides	Rest	3 miles easy	Rest	3 miles easy	6 miles easy
2	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 2 strides	Rest	1 mile easy, 4 laps of a quarter-mile track (stride the straight, jog the curves), 1 mile easy	Rest	3 miles easy	7 miles easy
3	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 4 strides	Rest	3 miles easy	Rest	4 miles easy	6 miles easy (*cutdown)
4	Rest	Cutdown run: 1 mile easy, then pick up the pace 10 to 15 seconds per mile each for the next three miles	Rest	3 miles easy + 4 strides	Rest	4 miles easy	8 miles easy
5	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 4 strides	Rest	1 mile easy, 4 x 30-second hill re- peats, 1 mile easy	Rest	4 miles easy	9 miles easy
6	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	3 miles easy	Rest	5 miles easy**	6 miles easy (*cutdown)
7	Rest	Tempo run: 1 mile easy, 2 miles at 30 seconds faster per mile than easy pace, 1 mile easy, 1 mile at 30 seconds faster per mile than easy pace	Rest	3 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	4 miles easy	10 miles easy
8	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	1 mile easy, 4 x 45-second hill re- peats, 1 mile easy	Rest	4 miles easy	11 miles easy
9	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	3 miles easy	Rest	6 miles easy**	6 miles easy (*cutdown)
10	Rest	Tempo run: 1 mile easy, 2 miles at 30 seconds faster per mile than normal easy pace, 1 mile easy, 2 miles at 30 seconds faster per mile than normal easy pace	Rest	3 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	5 miles easy	12 miles easy
11	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy + 6 strides	Rest	1 mile easy, 6 x 45-second hill re- peats, 1 mile easy	Rest	6 miles easy	6 miles easy (*cutdown)
12	Rest	3 to 4 miles easy	Rest	3 miles easy + 4 strides	Rest		

KEY

REST Don't run—if you like to cross-train, keep it low-impact.
EASY A relaxed pace slow enough for conversations with friends.
STRIDES These 10- to 15-second postrun pickups help you

practice staying relaxed while running fast. Gradually increase your speed for approximately 5 seconds, hold for 5 seconds—speedy but never straining—then gradually slow down.
HILL REPEATS Running hills boosts power,

efficiency, and speed, with less impact than a speed workout on a flat surface. Choose a hill that's not so steep that it alters your stride. Run up at a comfortably hard effort, then walk or jog back down for recovery.

***CUTDOWN** If you have a time goal in mind, on Sunday in weeks 3, 6, 9, and 11: Start with 2 miles at an easy pace, then speed up approximately 10 seconds per mile for each of the remaining miles. You shouldn't be exhausted afterward.

****TWO-A-DAYS** If training for multiple races in a single day, do run #3 and run #4 this week on the same day with several hours in between. (**NOTE:** If doing both of your weekend runs on the same day, keep them easy and skip cutdowns.)

EAT FOR TWO (RACES)

Recovery between races hinges on what you take in before, during, and afterward, says Kate Davis, M.S., a board-certified sports dietitian at RDKate Sports Nutrition in Naperville, Illinois. “Anytime you’re asking your body to compete for multiple days, you want to stay on top of the calories you’re going to be burning,” she says.

RACE-WEEK PLAN

EAT

Protein

Provides the building blocks for muscle repair. Choose lean options like chicken and fish or low-fat dairy.

Carbohydrates

Fuel endurance performance. Your muscles can store enough for about a 90-minute effort; if your half marathon will take longer, consume extra before and during the race.

Fruits, veggies, whole grains

Provide carbs along with vitamins and minerals that boost your immune system and fight muscle damage.

Healthy fats

Unsaturated fats in nuts, fish, and avocado decrease inflammation and fill you up.

LIMIT

Cruciferous vegetables

Like broccoli, kale, and beans: May cause gas.

Dairy

Excellent lean protein source—but can cause digestive distress in some runners when eaten immediately prerace. Assess your individual tolerance.

AVOID

Alcohol

Dehydrates and adds no-value calories.

Fried foods, soda, sugary treats






Promote weight gain, as well as inflammation that impairs recovery.

High-fiber foods

Normally good for you but they slow digestion, so avoid in the hours pre- and postrace.

RACE WEEKEND

TIMELINE

FRIDAY	DINNER, EARLY		EAT	DRINK	
SATURDAY	MORNING, TWO HOURS PRERACE		Half to three-quarters of a plate full of carbs, 1 serving of lean protein EXAMPLES Salmon with brown rice and veggies; grilled chicken with whole-wheat pasta and tomato sauce; thin-crust pizza, heavy on veggies and light on cheese	Water, juice, low-fat milk, herbal tea	
	IN RACES UNDER 60 TO 90 MINUTES		2 to 3 servings of grains, 1 serving of fruit, 1 serving of protein EXAMPLES Peanut butter and jelly sandwich; smoothie with Greek yogurt and berries; egg breakfast wrap with a banana	2 cups of water when your alarm goes off; 2 more with breakfast; coffee, if you do so regularly	
	POSTRACE, WITHIN AN HOUR		Nothing, or try a gel or two if you couldn't eat breakfast	Water, or sports drink if you had no breakfast	
	POSTRACE, WITHIN TWO TO THREE HOURS		Snack with protein and carbohydrates EXAMPLES Chocolate milk; an energy bar with at least 10 grams of protein	Water, sports drink	
SUNDAY	NIGHT		A full meal of lean protein, high-quality carbs, and fat EXAMPLES Fresh salad with grilled chicken; salmon plus a whole-grain roll	Water, juice, low-fat milk	
			Repeat Friday night's dinner, add an evening snack of carbs and protein an hour before bed EXAMPLES Pretzels and peanut butter; trail mix; half a PBJ	Water	
	MORNING, TWO HOURS PRERACE		Similar breakfast to Saturday's—slightly larger if you can stomach it	2 cups of water when your alarm goes off; 2 more with breakfast; coffee, if you do so regularly	
	DURING RACE		30 to 60 grams of carbs per hour beginning 30 to 45 minutes after the race start EXAMPLES 2 gels; 1 gel and 2 cups of sports drink; pretzels	Sports drink, water (wash gels down with plain H ₂ O to increase absorption)	
SUNDAY	POSTRACE		Snack with protein and carbs within an hour—then celebrate. “Make the first thing you eat something to make your sports dietitian happy, and then do whatever you want,” Davis says.	Water first, then you can hit the beer tent	

NOTE: Check what race officials will provide on the course. If you don't know or don't like those products, pack and carry your own.



GASPARILLA DISTANCE CLASSIC February 20–21, 2016, Tampa, FL

5K and 15K (Saturday)
+ half marathon and
8K (Sunday)

THE SWAG Embroidered challenge jacket and finisher's medal
THE SCENE "Run for the booty"—the race is pirate-themed—along a scenic waterfront course. If doubling up isn't enough, you can tackle all four distances (you'll have a safe place to stash your medals and a special refueling tent in between).
tampabayrun.com



COWTOWN CHALLENGE

February 26–28, 2016,
Fort Worth, TX
5K or 10K (Saturday) +
half marathon (Sunday)

THE SWAG Challenge medal + additional reward TBD
THE SCENE A Texas-sized multi-event race—the largest in the Lone Star State, with more than 28,000 total runners—also offers a marathon and 50K ultra.
cowntownmarathon.org



RACE, RECOVER, REPEAT

Multiple races challenge your muscles, joints, and brain, making recovery both a physical and a psychological process. Here's what to do after you cross the first finish line so you're ready to do it all over again the next day.

Boost your bloodflow

The better circulation you have, the more oxygen and healing nutrients travel to your damaged muscles. Try compression socks or tights if you've used them in training, Leivers suggests; Green recommends putting on comfortable, supportive shoes (no flip-flops!) and doing some easy walking. But don't trek for miles—this shouldn't be your major sight-seeing day.

Tend to aches

Ice anything that's sore for 10 to 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off. Take note of new pains that set in either during the first race, a few

hours after, or the next morning. If you have more than just general soreness—a sharp pain in a specific location, pain that alters your gait, or re-aggravation of an existing injury—opt out of your subsequent race to avoid causing long-term damage, Green says.

Loosen muscles and joints

The evening of your first race day, foam roll and do light stretches if that's part of your regular routine. Or lie on the floor with your legs up the wall for 10 to 15 minutes, Green says. The morning of the half marathon, do a prerace dynamic warmup: Start with two minutes of light

jogging, then do front and side leg swings, mini-squats, and arm circles to increase your body temperature and prime your muscles. If you're sore or tight, consider starting the race at a walk or slow jog until things loosen up.

Shut your eyes

The night between races, turn the lights out early: "Most of your recovery is going to happen while you're sleeping," Leivers says. Some runners find it easier to drift off after the first early morning and day of racing excitement. If the sandman eludes you, don't freak out—anxiety only drives sleep further out of reach, says Terry Chiplin, owner of Active at Altitude in Estes Park, Colorado, and official training partner for Vacation Races. "I'm also a big believer in meditation and relaxation," he says, advising nervous runners to employ deep

breathing or similar techniques to ease their minds.

Wrangle your emotions

Expect normal race-day mood swings and then some, Chiplin says. As you contemplate the second (or third, or fourth) starting line, you might even feel regret. To cope, reframe nervousness as excitement—think, *This is what I signed up for and it's going to be fun!* English says. This adjustment takes on added importance if your first race went poorly. Pick one thing you did well, and carry that with you into the next day. "You want to go into the next race positive no matter what," Green says. If race organizers offer seminars, speakers, or other activities between races (we do at the Runner's World Half & Festival!), use them to connect with other runners to lighten your mood. 🍷

Ace Multi-Race Days

EVENTS THAT
TAKE PLACE
JUST HOURS APART
REQUIRE SLIGHTLY
DIFFERENT TACTICS.

REHEARSE

At least once or twice in training, stack two runs the same length of time apart as your races (e.g., 90 minutes, for the 5K and 10K that are part of the Runner's World Hat Trick).

RESTRAIN

The consequences of starting too quickly grow more dire in this situation, especially if you're racing again the next day. As with two-day events, choose one race to run as a fast effort, and do the other as a warmup or cooldown.

REPLENISH

You'll want a quick hit of carbs and a little protein posttrace to replenish your energy stores. Experiment beforehand with chocolate milk, banana with peanut butter, or pretzels with a cheese stick to see what you can tolerate.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE FAT *AND* FIT?
HEALTHY AND HAPPY AS WELL AS HEAVY? AT 250 POUNDS, DISTANCE
RUNNER MIRNA VALERIO PROVIDES AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE.



Ultra

BY JOHN BRANT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN MELTZ



Valerio in Black
Rock Mountain
State Park in
Mountain City,
Georgia, for an
early morning
trail run

"PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY TO ME, 'ANYONE WHO RUNS AS MUCH AS YOU DO DESERVES TO BE

SKINNY.'

OF COURSE, WHAT THEY'RE REALLY SAYING: 'IF YOU DO ALL THIS RUNNING, WHY ARE YOU STILL SO

FAT?'"

Mirna Valerio climbs out of her car at Black Rock Lake. It's a shining afternoon in early April in the high country of northeastern Georgia, along the eastern reach of the Appalachian Mountains. The serviceberry trees are budding on the hogback hills, but the oak trees and other hardwoods remain bare.

Early that morning, before dawn, Valerio had led a three-mile group run around the campus of Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in the nearby town of Rabun Gap, where she serves as Spanish teacher, choir director, and head coach of the cross-country team. She's about to start her second run of the day.

"Or people think, *She claims to follow a healthy diet, but I bet she goes home every night and eats a gallon of ice cream.*"

Moving toward the fishing platform where she always begins her Black Rock runs, Valerio pulls out her smartphone. "But you know what bothers me the most? People look at me and think, *Big as this girl is, how can she possibly enjoy her sport? She says she loves to run, but she's really just punishing herself.*"

Valerio's voice—bright, plangent, and Juilliard-trained—rouses a middle-aged man who's been dozing on a sunny bench on the fishing deck. He looks at Valerio—a 39-year-old, 5-foot-7, 250-pound African-American dressed in a ball cap, fitness top, knee-length running tights, and training shoes—and does a cartoon-grade double take. Valerio blasts him with a big smile and a "Good afternoon, sir!"

And then, turning, she extends her arm for a ritual selfie. Every run, every race, every traverse of a mountain trail, every gym workout, Valerio begins by taking a photo. "To prove that I was out here," she explains. "To document the fact that I achieved something today."

Later, she will post the photos on her Facebook page and her blog, *Fat Girl Running*, in which she both writes of the joys of the running life and thoughtfully, humorously, and sometimes angrily rebuts her doubters, who can't believe that a self-described fat person might discover—or deserve—this kind of joy. No pun intended, her blog has earned a widening audience and influence.

"Over the last 40 years, the collective BMI (body mass index) of the American public has shot up dramatically, with catastrophic consequences," says David Ludwig, M.D., Ph.D., founder and director of the New Balance Foundation Obesity Prevention Center at Boston Children's Hospital. "We understandably spotlight the biggest losers, the people who drop 100 pounds and turn their lives around. But there are countless others who, despite exercising and following a high-quality diet, can only whittle their BMI to a certain point. They need to learn to live healthfully with the disease of obesity, rather than make themselves miserable trying to 'cure' themselves of it."

With a BMI of approximately 39.2, more than nine points above the National Institutes of Health-established line defining obesity, Valerio, a marathoner, ultramarathoner, and trail runner, has emerged as a role model for this group; a living argument that it's possible to be both fit and fat. "I'm pretty much in love with my body," she writes in her blog.

"Sometimes I get disappointed or angry with it, but like any long-term, committed relationship, it usually comes right back to love and respect."

"Mirna is proud of who she is and what she's achieved," says Craig Lloyd, chief operating officer of TrailAndUltraRunning.com, an online publication that posts Valerio's work as a contributing writer. "She doesn't want to cure herself of anything."

By making peace with her obesity—or, more accurately, by fighting her disease to a kind of enduring, vigorously active truce—Valerio draws kudos from a formerly skeptical medical community. As recently as a few years ago, the jury was still out on the fit and fat contro-



Racing ahead (clockwise from top left): 2013 Finger Lakes 50s 25K; 2010 North Face Half; 2013 Great Alaskan Marathon Cruise 5K.



versy. A highly publicized 2008 study, for instance, found that compared with normal-weight active women, the risk of developing heart disease was 54 percent higher in overweight active women and 87 percent higher in obese active women. In effect, the study seemed to suggest, you really can't live healthfully with obesity; being fit and being fat truly were mutually exclusive.

Since then, however, a number of studies have been published reaching a somewhat different conclusion. "The scientific evidence has become quite powerful to suggest that a healthful lifestyle dramatically mitigates the risks associated with mild levels of obesity," says Yoni Freedhoff, M.D., author of *The Diet Fix* and a professor at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine in Canada. "Scales don't measure the presence or absence of health. A woman with obesity running marathons makes a superb role model."

However, fit and fat runners such as Valerio still have their nonscientific detractors, whose criticism, while most often tacit and unintentional, still cuts deep: the running-shop clerk who laughs when she tells him she will be running every day, and media outlets (including *Runner's World*) that have traditionally sent an implicit but powerful message that the sport belongs to the slender, or to those who strive to be.

"I know how hard it is for some people to accept me," Valerio says. "Serious running and being seriously fat just don't go together in people's minds. If I didn't run, I wouldn't draw notice. I'd just be one more obese black woman. And if I were thin, I'd just be one more number at the starting line. But I run a lot, and I'm still fat. Some people can't get their heads around that. They don't think I'm for real, that I've earned the right to call myself a runner. They don't say it out loud; you learn to read it in their eyes."

VALERIO SETTLES in to the three-quarter-mile-long trail along the lakeshore. She runs about 25 miles a week if she's not training for a race, 35 if she's pointing toward an event, with the bulk of the mileage logged on a long weekend run. Right now she's in a higher-mileage phase, preparing for a 50K trail race in Georgia at the end of the month.

Valerio runs at about an 11- to 13-minute-mile pace, roughly the same rate at which Terry Fox ran across Canada on one good leg and one prosthetic leg in 1980. She takes walking breaks, but they're neither extended nor frequent; unlike many runners following a structured walk-run system, she doesn't cling to her chances for rest. In fact, the breaks grow shorter as the miles accrue. "Mirna outdoes almost everyone on campus," says her friend, colleague, and training partner Rebecca Smith. "The farther she runs, the stronger she gets."

Also similar to Terry Fox, there's



Valerio snaps a ritual selfie with a group of her students before a run. Right: a collage of motivation.



nothing elegant about Valerio's sprawling, swivel-hipped gait. Coaches would tell her that she wastes energy by holding her arms too high and rapidly swinging them across the meridian of her chest. But the style works for Valerio, appearing to serve as corrective balance for the ponderous progress of her lower body, distinguished by barrel-like thighs and a heavy scoop of belly.

Her determined stride has carried Valerio over six marathons, two trail ultramarathons, and scores of shorter road races. Her marathon PR is 6:13, but she doesn't judge success by the clock. "I almost never finish last," she says.

Near the end of her first loop around the lake, Valerio encounters a hiker, a middle-aged woman moving in the opposite direction. The woman, astonished, stops in her tracks. "Beautiful day for a walk!" Valerio says with a smile.

Then she runs on, her smile fading. "The reaction from that woman back there—it's not just that I'm fat."

Valerio explains that, unlike more well-known parts of the South, the mountains of northern Georgia were unsuited for cotton plantations or other large farms and thus accumulated few black slaves and their descendants. Today, Rabun County has a small Hispanic population but only a handful of African-Americans. "As far as I know," Valerio says, "there are very few black families that live in the county."

White people around the nearby town of Dillard, a center for tourism and the

arts, have proved welcoming, she says. But the attitudes along the impoverished, meth-ridden back roads sometimes reflect a darker past. "Rumor has it that one of Georgia's last active Klan chapters is based in the next town over," she says, adding that parts of the movie *Deliverance*, the 1970s classic depicting chilling scenes of backwoods violence, were filmed in Rabun Gap.

"One Saturday morning I was out for a long run on the road by my house," Valerio recalls. "It's a great place to run, except for the dogs. I always carry a carved walking stick on that route."

The scene seems all too easy to imagine: a 250-pound black woman, running alone down an isolated road in *Deliverance* country, carrying a big stick.

"I'm running along and a police cruiser pulls up beside me," she continues. "The deputy looks at me, but he doesn't say anything. We go on like that for maybe a minute, but it felt like an hour. Finally, he just eased away."

After her run, relaxing at the fishing platform, Valerio engages the man and the female hiker, who are a couple. They're visiting the lake with their son, who appears to be around 20. "Did you really run all the way around the lake?" the father asks. It's the type of ingeniously condescending question that Valerio hears regularly.

"Yes, sir," she says. "I'm training for a race."

"What kind of race?"

"A 50-kilometer trail run." The fa-

ther gives a blank look. "That's about 31 miles," Valerio adds.

The man gapes, then recovers. "Say, maybe you know Sean, my nephew? He runs all those crazy races."

The Georgia trail-running community is small and tightly knit; Valerio says she has run often in Sean Blanton's events. Blanton is a prominent trail runner from Atlanta. The man is delighted. "Hey, this lady knows Sean!" he says to his wife.

Valerio talks about some of her recent races. The son listens with a wistful look; his mother explains that he was a good high-school cross-country runner but in recent years has drifted away from the sport. Valerio locks in on the boy—she is a fierce proselytizer, as the community has discovered.

"Mirna is the reason I started running again," says Rebecca Smith. "My parents are runners and tried to get me into it. But it never quite worked for me. I always had an injury or a shoe issue or some other problem. Then I got to know Mirna, who you just can't say no to. She's also extremely knowledgeable on the practical aspects of the sport. Now I'm a regular in the early morning group."

Valerio also spreads the gospel to her students. Kids who are late or don't show up for cross-country practice have to run with her early morning group on campus. "Ms. Valerio is the most popular, energetic teacher on campus," says James Maxwell Trammell, a rising senior at Rabun Gap, co-captain of the cross-country team, and the president

of the student diversity club that Valerio started. “In terms of running, she projects an aura of inclusiveness: No matter who you are or what you look like, you have a place in this free, open sport.”

Now, at the lake, Valerio invites the boy out to a morning run at the Rabun Gap track. He nods evasively. “No, I mean it,” Valerio says, looking the boy in the eye. “Come run with us. We’ll be out there tomorrow morning.”

The parents glow from the attention bestowed on their son. “Where are you from, honey?” the father asks.

“Brooklyn,” Valerio replies.

“Brooklyn! How come you don’t sound like it?”

Valerio gives another smile. “It’s a long story,” she says.

WHEN MIRNA VALERIO TELLS her friends that she was raised in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, bordering the Ridgewood neighborhood, they imagine poverty, drugs, gangs, violence, and stark gray housing projects; they envision absent fathers, single mothers on public assistance, children locked away in apartments to avoid the danger of the streets, and type 2 diabetes scouring the community worse than handguns or heroin. Valerio knew this world as she was growing up, but there were grace notes, too: Love and grit instilled a strength in her family and propelled Valerio on her extraordinary trajectory.

Her mother was a strong matriarch who insisted on sitting down to a family dinner every night. Homework time was strictly enforced. Although Valerio’s biological father, a Honduran merchant seaman, was often absent, off on ships around the world, he communicated by long, detailed, carefully typewritten letters. Her stepfather, who worked in a hospital laundry, brought home books he acquired at the hospital or from catalogs—odd tomes that no one else wanted, including obscure medical textbooks. There was church all day Sunday, as part of a Pentecostal congregation with a caring, intelligent pastor.

Valerio loved to read. “The family would tease her, call her a bookworm,” recalls her younger sister, Natasha Taylor. Valerio wanted to be a gastroenterologist because of one of the medical books her stepfather brought home, and because she wanted to help her family with their health problems. Her mother was obese, diabetic, and hypertensive. Valerio and her three siblings were likely headed down the same path.

“In second grade I remember being

very thin,” Valerio says. “In third grade I noticed my legs getting big. By the time I was 12 or 13, I was big all over.”

However, she wasn’t generally teased about her size. “Nobody gave us a hard time,” says Taylor, who at age 30 continues to deal with obesity-related health problems. “Our parents shielded us from

After a marathon, Valerio turned to ultras—the longer the better, by her lights. She likes the challenge and solitude of the mountains, as well as the comradeship and spirit of the trail-running community, which has welcomed her with open arms.

the worst stuff in Bushwick, and everybody on our block was like family.”

Perhaps the sisters were spared ridicule because obesity is so common among African-American females. According to CDC statistics, 57.6 percent of black women age 20 and over are obese (with a BMI of 30 or above), and almost 82 percent are overweight (defined by the NIH as having a BMI ranging from 25 to 29.9) or obese. On the infrequent occasions when she

was hassled—in seventh grade, she recalls, one boy called her a “fat bitch”—Valerio found solace in her books and her journal.

“It might be hard to believe now, but I was extremely shy as a young girl,” she says. “I couldn’t look people in the eye.”

School formed another refuge. From Head Start forward, Valerio followed the talented-and-gifted track. In middle school, she was selected for the “Prep 9” program, which prepared gifted disadvantaged students for entrance into elite private boarding schools such as Exeter and Andover. Valerio excelled in academics but remained shy and insecure. As ninth grade approached, teachers steered her to the Masters School, an all-girls 5–12 boarding academy in Westchester County, New York.

“From the moment I stepped on campus, I felt comfortable,” Valerio says of the school, which took pride in nurturing girls from all over the world; for instance, the attorney Michelle Roberts, a native of a Bronx housing project who was recently named head of the National Basketball Players Association, graduated from Masters. “There were a lot of smart kids at the school, and being in a boarding school helped me to grow.”

On her first day at school, Valerio decided to join the field hockey team.

“I had never heard of it, but it looked interesting,” she says.

For all her bulk and shyness, Valerio felt at home in her

School days (clockwise from top left): third grade; a Juilliard Pre-College recital; Oberlin graduation; in high school.



body. Unlike many overweight kids, she hadn't learned to hate herself. (Interestingly, cultural and racial factors seem to play a key role in the complex interplay of body image and self-esteem; in a 2012 survey commissioned by the Kaiser Family Foundation in partnership with *The Washington Post*, 66 percent of overweight black women reported feelings of high self-esteem, compared to just 41 percent of thin or average-sized white women.) "I never had PE at middle school," Valerio says. "I didn't have the money to join leagues or organized sports, but I knew what it was to play."

The first task was to run five laps around the field. Valerio and another unathletic scholarship student, Kristina Calbo from the Bronx, decided to give it a try. They started the death march around the field while Valerio's mother, by turns proud and horrified, watched through a plate glass window up in the dining hall. Valerio might easily have quit after one heaving, lurching, agonized lap. She could have honorably taken the out of being a fat girl, and retreated permanently from physical challenges. Instead, she and Calbo struggled but kept running. "After the laps we had a two-hour practice," Valerio says. "The next day I was so sore I couldn't move, but I was hooked."

She loved being part of a team, and the absorption and pulse of the game. She learned to tolerate, and eventually enjoy, running the pre-practice laps. For extra training, Valerio and Calbo started rising at dawn to run a mile or two around the dark leafy campus.

While making herself into an athlete, Valerio spontaneously blossomed as a singer. Her mother and sister sang R&B around the apartment, and Valerio had taught herself to play piano by ear and sometimes sang gospel with her church choir, but she'd never had formal musical training, aside from basic classes at school. Two minutes into Valerio's audition for the Masters School Glee Club, the director told her to stop. "In 25 years of teaching, I have never heard a soprano voice like that," Valerio remembers the director saying.

Members of the school music department gave the girl free lessons. She forged an identity as the vocalist on campus. "Mirna was an incredible talent and even more amazing person," recalls Nancy Theeman, who became Valerio's music teacher during her second year at the school. "Mirna wasn't into singing for the attention and glory. There's this dense textbook that every music student



"The most popular teacher on campus" at home with students from the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

gets assigned—*A History of Western Music*—but few actually read. Well, Mirna took the book home over winter vacation and read it for pleasure."

Valerio's talent and discipline were such that one of her teachers arranged for the girl to audition for the Juilliard Pre-College Division program, which prepares elementary through high-school performers for entrance into the famous music academy in New York City and other conservatories around the country. "The audition was insanely competitive," Valerio recalls. "Students traveled in from D.C., Baltimore, and Florida to try out." Valerio nailed the audition and enrolled in the program.

She attended Masters during the week, excelling academically, demonstrating a particular gift for languages. She played field hockey and lacrosse and ran in the mornings with Calbo, then on weekends rode the train and subway two hours to Manhattan's Upper West Side to study at The Juilliard School, perhaps the foremost performing arts conservatory in the world.

Throughout her high-school years, Valerio says, she was unfazed by weight and body-image concerns. "My hockey and lacrosse coaches were unfailingly positive," she says. "They had to improvise to find uniforms big enough to fit me, but they never said a word about my weight. They just expected me to do my workouts and eat sensibly. If I did that, my weight would take care of itself, which is pretty much the rule I live by today. I didn't think much about dating or boys. I was busy and happy, and I didn't define myself by my physical appearance."

Graduation approached, and Valerio faced a difficult choice. "Mirna had the talent to pursue a career in opera," says Theeman. "The question was, did she have that total single-mindedness that you need to make it as a professional performing artist? She was so bright and inquisitive—by this time she was fluent in Spanish. She didn't want to limit herself to one narrow calling."

Valerio puts her choice in plainer terms. "Sopranos have the reputation for not being the brightest bulbs," she says. "I had a lot of interests besides music. If I had just pursued singing, I wouldn't have been happy."

She accepted a scholarship to The Oberlin College Conservatory of Music in Ohio, where she could pursue both music and the liberal arts. At Oberlin she majored in Spanish and vocal performance and kept physically active, although her voice teacher told her she couldn't play sports because practice times conflicted with her commitment to the Oberlin College Choir. As graduation approached, she faced the same choice as when leaving high school: Grab for the brass ring in opera or go for a more conventional career? Valerio opted for the latter.

She went to work in New York City for KPMG, a prestigious audit, tax, and advisory consulting firm, and sang on the side, auditioning for The Metropolitan Opera Chorus and other positions. She met her husband, Cito Nikiema, a native of Burkina Faso in West Africa, one day while waiting for the subway during a blizzard. Recalling the pleasure she took in sports as a teenager, she started running road races put on by New York

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Valerio with her husband, Cito Nikiema, and son, Rashid, at their home in Rabun Gap.

Road Runners. She enrolled in an eight-week-long running class, learning the craft of the sport in the same thorough way that she studied music. Valerio seemed to be on her way, but success in the corporate world left her unsatisfied. She decided to return to where she'd first blossomed, taking a job teaching voice and music at the Masters School. "Actually," Theeman says, "I recruited her."

"After my third day I was hooked," Valerio says of the teaching profession. The next year, she was hired at Masters as a full-time music teacher. Thus began a career that would include teaching posts at a private school in Maryland and a boarding school in New Jersey. In 2013, Valerio accepted a job offer at the Rabun Gap School in Georgia, where she is today.

SITTING MAY BE the new smoking, but that's not why Valerio weighs 250 pounds.

In 2014, U.K. researchers published a study suggesting that a combination of high levels of physical activity and low levels of sitting time was necessary to reduce the risks of obesity. Further, the research showed that individuals

reporting high levels of activity and low levels of sitting were less likely to develop long-term obesity.

So could excess sitting be the trigger of Valerio's seemingly anomalous case of chronic obesity? Observing her in action through a typical day at Rabun Gap School, the answer clearly is no.

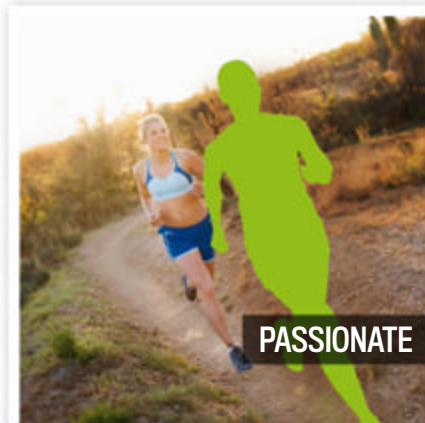
Her day begins before dawn with a three-mile run around the school's hilly campus. Then she drives home, showers and dresses, wakes Rashid, her 12-year-old son, and has breakfast with him before school. Then she heads back to Rabun Gap for a full docket of teaching and interacting with students, fellow teachers, and staff. During her second-period high-school Spanish class, she is constantly on her feet, moving around the room, taking advantage of the small class size to engage with each student. In Spanish, she talks about her experiences as a runner. Race photos and bib numbers decorate the wall above her desk.

In choir class, where she presides over a group of 34 kids, she takes a more structured tack, with a little less joking and humor, but she's even more active, conducting, waving, gesticulating, mov-

ing with light-footed grace. "People have a preconceived idea about the way a fat person is supposed to act," Valerio says between classes. "A fat person is supposed to be depressed and lethargic and slow-moving. A fat person is supposed to be diabetic and asthmatic and engage in a lot of self-destructive behavior. I don't act that way or look that way, and so, once they get to know me, people stop seeing me as a fat person."

In the afternoon, on the last day before the long Easter weekend, the entire student body of the church-related private school convenes in the auditorium for a chapel service. Valerio conducts the choir in a rendition of a solemn hymn in Latin, and then it's her turn to perform. She stands for an unaccompanied solo version of the spiritual "Were You There?" Her swelling soprano voice fills the theater, holding the audience spellbound. Even the squirrely middle-school kids sit raptly. Valerio concludes to a cascade of applause.

After the assembly, out in the lobby, she accepts more accolades. Then, finally, she sits for a moment, riffing on the tired old saw, "It ain't over till the fat lady sings." "Of course, deep down,



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I would like to be thinner,” she says. “Accepting my weight doesn’t mean I’m satisfied with my weight. You meet a fat person who says otherwise, she’s lying.”

If Valerio weighed less, for one thing, she could run faster; a loss of one pound increases speed by about two seconds per mile of running. “And I’m well aware of the health risks of fat around the belly, and that obesity increases the chance of developing rheumatoid arthritis,” she continues. “I see myself as engaged in a long-term—maybe life-long—campaign to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. I’ve already had my season of dramatic weight loss, and I don’t expect to go through another one.”

THAT SEASON STARTED in crisis. On a late summer evening in 2008, while driving through Pennsylvania’s Lehigh Valley on Route 222, en route to New Jersey, where she then taught at the Purnell School, a blazing star of pain rose in Mirna Valerio’s chest. She felt certain she was having a heart attack and was terrified that she was going to die. She was only 33, and her son, who was with her, had just turned 5.

Rashid had developed a pernicious case of asthma that kept the child and his mother up at night. Valerio would work all week at the Purnell School on little sleep; on weekends, she supplemented her teacher’s salary by giving music lessons in the Baltimore area, where she’d previously taught. So on Saturday morning she’d drive three hours to Maryland and give lessons all day, while a babysitter watched Rashid. She wasn’t eating more than usual, but the exhausting schedule

left scant time or energy for exercise, and her weight ballooned north of 300 pounds. She knew she had to confront her obesity—which was now a matter of health, not appearance—but she kept putting it off. Now, with a point of pain digging a divot in the middle of her chest, Valerio was forced to face herself.

She pulled over to the side of the road and tried to breathe. The pain eased enough for her to keep driving. If she could just make it to the home of one of her colleagues from the Purnell School. By the time Valerio pulled into her colleague’s driveway, she was sure she was dying. Her friend graciously opened her home to Rashid and drove Valerio to the hospital emergency room.

There, Valerio received a mixed verdict. The good news: no evidence of a heart attack; doctors believed that Valerio had suffered a panic attack brought on by stress and exhaustion. The bad news: Blood tests showed extensive arterial inflammation. “Combined with my weight, it wasn’t a question of if I’d have a coronary or stroke, but when,” Valerio says. She was discharged from the ER but referred to a cardiologist.

She saw the specialist the next week: Dr. Freilich, a blunt-talking man from Brooklyn. “He looked at my charts, looked at me, and leaned across his desk,” Valerio recalls. “How old is your son again?” he asked me.

“Five,” I told him.”

“Want to be alive when he’s older?”

Valerio saw no need to reply.

“Then lose 15 pounds in the next two months,” the doctor said.

That got her attention, but what really nailed it was a follow-up appointment with

her primary care physician. Valerio was in the office when the doc got called away. Her file was open on the desk. She leaned over and took a peek at the diagnosis. “Patient is morbidly obese.”

“*Morbidly obese*,” Valerio says. “Those words hit me between the eyes.”

She called Nikki Buccello. Buccello was a colleague at the Purnell School, a math teacher almost as intense as Valerio. The two women would get talking over a glass of wine and in an hour have outlined an entire diversity curriculum. Valerio knew that Buccello wanted to lose weight for a wedding she’d be attending in September. Now it was June, the end of the academic year. They had the whole summer in front of them, with the school’s facilities at their disposal. “Before we get started, I’m warning you,” Buccello recalls Valerio telling her. “I’m the kind of person that once I begin something, I really get into it.”

“I said, ‘Whoa, sister, who do you think you’re talking to?’”

The two women dove into an intense exercise routine. They ran, hit the gym, and played tennis in afternoon heat and humidity. “We gave up junk food and obvious stuff, but neither of us was into a starvation diet,” Buccello says. “Mirna loves food and cooking. She makes grocery shopping a sensuous experience.”

Recalling the 5Ks she enjoyed during the years she worked in Manhattan, Valerio suggested that they enter a local road race in New Jersey. “Sure,” Buccello said. “We can work up to it and try one in a few weeks.”

“Actually,” Valerio said, “there’s a 5K tonight. I already paid our entry fees.”

They started doing a 5K each week, sometimes more than one. Buccello would run until she got tired, and then walk. Valerio steamed along at her steady 13-minute pace. They rarely finished last.

“For me, running has always been a necessary evil, something I endure for the pounds to come off,” says Buccello, whose weight dropped from 185 to 150 that summer. “But Mirna loves running for its own sake. It’s paradoxical, almost funny in a way, but it seems like, big as she is, Mirna has a gift for running long distances. She doesn’t start to feel good until she’s covered five or 10 miles.”

Still, matters that most runners take for granted—from finding clothes to avoiding chafing to simply melting invisibly into the pack at the starting line—were an ordeal for Valerio. Even though she had every apparent motive to hate running, (Continued on page 102)

Valerio stretches with a group of friends before a morning run. “You just can’t say no to Mirna,” says one.





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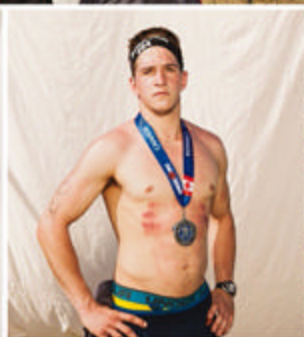
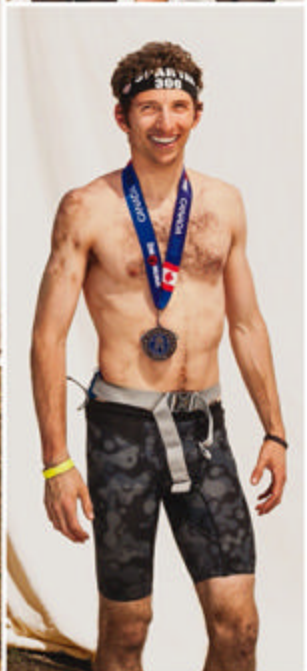
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SOMETHING Wild

More runners than ever are joining up with friends to run, hike, push, pull, climb, and get dirty in obstacle course races. Wanna try?

BY JOSH DEAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON LEVINE



“I AM A

SPARTAN!

People around me yell this every time a hype man on the PA asks, “Who am I?” in the final moments before the official start of the 11:30 a.m. wave of the “Montreal” Spartan Race, which I put in quotes because the race location isn’t actually anywhere near Montreal. In fact, we are two hours north of that city, on a remote section of the Mont Tremblant ski resort, clustered under an arch on a warm day that’s getting warmer by the minute, as the morning’s clouds burn away, giving the sun full purchase to scorch those among us who forgot to apply sunblock. Me, for instance.

And then my first Spartan Race begins with a brisk hike, just me and a couple hundred mostly French-Canadians in tight shorts, many of them shirtless, chanting in unison as if going off to battle, which is the feeling Spartan’s organizers obviously hope to elicit. “I am a Spartan!” the racers howl as they cross under the start banner and begin immediately to climb Tremblant, which at 2,871 feet is the highest peak in Quebec’s beautiful and, on this day in mid-May, spectacularly verdant Laurentian Mountains.

The idea behind the Spartan Race is to evoke, however tenuously, the feeling of being some ancient warrior instead of the sedentary office drones most of us probably are, to provide a challenge of mind and body that tests runners’ strength and

endurance. Its very name, Spartan, was chosen in homage to the famed soldiers of ancient Sparta, 300 of whom once held off the entire Persian army at Thermopylae, under the command of Leonidis. Consequently, the mood before, after, and in the early stages of a race is almost primal, with lots of barking and yawping as men and women prepare to run, jump, climb, and lift things.

But first, we have to hike. The Tremblant course immediately rounds a bend and turns straight up, precipitously enough that nearly everyone in my heat makes the prudent decision to just walk swiftly in lieu of running. Those few questionably sane or just overeager entrants who try to run don’t get far, and within five minutes we the brisk-walking masses pass them gasping on the side of a grassy ski slope.

Gradually, the trail steepens and the masses thin out, slowly and then not so slowly, as dudes who could probably rip mature trees from the ground fade because no matter how much strength-training and even road running they’ve done, there’s no way to prepare for climbing uphill, for a long time, except by climbing lots of hills, for a long time, or doing thousands of squats and lunges—some of which I’d been doing, and thank God for that. I’m not going

to say this 30-minute, 1,200-vertical-foot ascent was pleasant, but it wasn’t awful, either. The sun was out, the sky was blue, a soft breeze blew across the trail, and the local birds were out in force, singing in celebration that the long Canadian winter was finally over.

Starting the race with a long, steep ascent was a devious touch. It wasn’t so hard that anyone out there was cursing the course designers—not yet—but it had a cumulative effect. The Spartan organizers were weakening us from head to toe in preparation for things to come, in the way that smart boxers pound the midsection for rounds before they start throwing haymakers.

I have a cabin in the Catskills, and I hike a lot, mostly uphill. So while the climbing wasn’t wearing me out, it did start to irritate me, because this trail seemed to have no summit. There was always another stretch of grass, beaten down by the waves that preceded us. I remembered something my trainer, a Spartan veteran who runs in the women’s “elite” category, had told me the first time we met. “The biggest thing is the terrain,” she said. “It kicks your ass.”

IT’S UNFAIR to say that I hadn’t exercised in the year since my second son was born, in April 2014, but my activity over that period had been fairly low-impact at best—mostly a little snowboarding, with the occasional short run or hike when I wasn’t drunk from sleeplessness and when the weather was something other than awful. But the winter was the worst in recent memory, and that combined with a baby who hated to sleep after dark resulted in a fairly soft version of myself. And so I did something rash: I signed up for a Spartan Race just six weeks in the future.

Spartans come in three distances: Sprint (3+ miles, 20+ obstacles); Super (8+ miles; 25+ obstacles); and Beast (13+ miles, 30+ obstacles). [Editor’s note: Runner’s World has a promotional partnership with Spartan.] A rational person might have opted for the entry-level version, but I’d done a few 5K Warrior Dash obstacle course races (OCRs) in the past for fun, and while those weren’t easy, a person in good health can finish one with little training. (My wife, for instance, ran one, with no training, just three months after our first son was born. And she’s not a runner.) I wanted a bigger challenge,

The Montreal Spartan Super race in May had 12 wave starts of 250+ people each.



MASTER THE OBSTACLES



GET STRONG OUTSIDE

In an OCR, grip and shoulder strength, pull, and endurance will get you to the finish line. Yancy Culp, 42, a certified Spartan SGX coach based in Austin, Texas, suggests rotating through these rugged moves at five-minute intervals during a five-mile trail run.

► SQUAT PRESS WITH ROCK

(1) Find a rock and grasp it between your palms. (2) Bring the rock parallel to your chest, with your elbows close to your sides. Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. (3) Push your hips back and bend into a basic squat, keeping your weight in your heels, knees over your toes, and chest tall. Stand up out of the squat and press the rock above your head. (4) Return to start. Do 10 reps.

► TREE LIMB DEAD-HANG OR PULLUP

(1) Find a tree limb that will support your body weight. (2) Pull yourself up until your chest touches the limb. (3) Lower yourself down and hang for 10 breaths. Do as many as you can. **Note:** If you can't do unassisted pullups, drape a towel or rope over the limb, grab both ends with your hands, and jump off the ground to assist the pullup.

► BEAR CRAWL

(1) Get down on your hands and knees. (2) Engage your abs and lift your hips up slightly to bring your knees off the ground. (3) Step forward with your right arm and right foot. Do the same thing on the left side. (4) Keeping your core engaged and your back flat, bear-crawl for 20 yards.

—Ali Nolan

something that would force me to actually get up earlier and work for it.

That's how I ended up rising twice a week at 5:30 to drive into Manhattan to meet Rebecca Golian, a personal trainer, certified Spartan SGX coach, and Spartan elite racer, meaning she competes for points against the best female obstacle course racers in the country. "The best thing to do is train your body at different levels of intensity," she told me. Spartan, she said, is a race that asks the question, "How tough are you physically?" and it does that by breaking you down over the course of the race, taxing your entire body so that even things that should be easy are not by the time you get to them. I told her I'd chosen to do the Super at Mont Tremblant. "You aren't making it easy on yourself," she said. "The elevation changes are tough. So we'll need to train your heart rate to go up and down."

The running, according to Golian, was no big deal: "If you can run three miles now, that's plenty." And even in my sorry current state, I could finish two or three miles without much pain.

Instead, Golian said, we'd focus on mixing intensity, and especially on a host of primitive skills that people don't typically practice—things like pushing, pulling, and climbing. Grip strength is important, for hangs and climbs. There's even a spear throw, which is kind of hard to practice. "This race isn't only about running and it isn't only about strength," Golian said. "I feel like it's the ultimate test of an athlete."

But most important, I asked, would I be okay?

Golian had me do a set of burpees followed by a long bear crawl, then said, "You're gonna be fine. If you get tired, just walk. My goal is to get you so that you don't injure yourself, and you don't end up miserable. Because that happens."

THE FIRST SPARTAN RACE was held in 2010, in Vermont, after equities trader and endurance racing fanatic Joe De Sena realized that there was probably a wider market for a less horrific version of the multi-day adventure races he'd been staging since 2004. Spartan was his more forgiving version, a military-inspired race designed to be inclusive even for "couch potatoes," he says. Which doesn't mean he wanted it to be easy. "Everyone suffers," De Sena says. But what he found is that regular people who wouldn't dream of running a half-marathon or



Obstacles include "monkey bars" (top) and tire hopping (below).

triathlon seemed to want to test themselves.

That same year, Spartan's two main rivals also came to market. Tough Mudder—Spartan's closest competitor—was born after Will Dean and Guy Livingston, two British expats living in New York, turned Dean's Harvard MBA program business plan (a semi-finalist in the school's famous competition) into an actual business that staged its first race at a Pennsylvania ski resort in May 2010, while Warrior Dash, which had just a single race in 2009, went national in 2010, staging 11 of its shorter 5K events around the country.

All three series owe some debt to Tough Guy, a legendary British cross-country race started in 1987 by a former British soldier named Billy Wilson, and while the founders of all three American obstacle course brands are bitter rivals—"there's not a person on earth I despise more than Will Dean," De Sena told *Outside* a few years back—the truth seems to be that there's plenty of OCR enthusiasm to go around. By 2012, Spartan, Tough Mudder, and Warrior Dash all had eight-figures' worth of revenue.

Recently, the private equity group Raptor Group Holdings gave De Sena





The author failed to climb this rope, resulting in a "fine" of 30 burpees. Ouch.

another pile of cash to spend, and the expansion continues. In 2015, there will be more than 120 Spartan events in more than 20 countries, covering one of the three core distances, plus a marathon-length Ultra Beast for elites. There's now a half-mile to mile Spartan Kids race at many tour stops. Entry fees range from \$60 to \$200, and even spectators have to pay \$20. Around 400,000 people will run Spartan Races in the U.S. this year. "Every year," says De Sena, "we get bigger."

De Sena thinks the races satisfy some latent, unscratched primal itch. "It's so authentic," he says. "Human beings are happier when they're outside, connected with the earth, just like my dog is happier. They just didn't have this outlet."

Sensing a phenomenon, Reebok signed on as the series' title sponsor in 2013 and now markets Spartan clothing alongside its successful CrossFit apparel business. What Reebok saw in Spartan was the same thing it saw in CrossFit: a larger fitness trend of people going "back to basics in group settings," says Yan Martin, Reebok's vice president of global brand communications. He believes it tapped a cultural trend that's apparent among millennials, who seem driven to collect experiences more than tangible objects. Finishing a difficult obstacle course race is an experience that people talk about for days after.

"You need to be fit holistically," Martin says. "If you're just a runner, you'll get crushed. If you just go to the gym, you'll have a hard time, too." Indeed, runners need to prepare for whatever the race

throws at them, whether that's balancing, hanging, lifting, or even throwing. Attempting to throw a crude javelin into a hay bale target is by far the most commonly biffed obstacle on the course. "Obstacle course racing embodies the spirit of training for the unknown—being able to adapt to any situation," Martin tells me. The experience, he says without irony, is often "life-changing. When you put yourself in uncomfortable situations, you really kind of grow as a person."

How dangerous are these uncomfortable situations? That question came up after the April 2013 drowning of a 28-year-old Maryland man at a Tough Mudder event in West Virginia. There have been other deaths, from heart attacks and heat-related ailments. But the ratio of incidents to total participants in OCR does not exceed that of marathons, bike races, or triathlons.

Proving yourself is clearly a driver of the obstacle course phenomenon, as is the mob/team camaraderie. "Non-traditional" races, which by and large means obstacle course races, surpassed marathons and half marathons in popularity in 2013 for the first time, and the differential is now growing each year. According to Running USA, the number of participants in nontraditional races has increased from "the low six figures in 2009" to "a staggering 4 million in 2014."

"We liked the fact that it was very inclusive," Martin says. The mood at Spartan races, he adds, is very congenial. "But that doesn't mean it's easy."

De Sena likes to say that he takes the

MASTER THE OBSTACLES



GET STRONG **INSIDE**

Do 3 sets of 15 reps of each, says Spartan coach Yancy Culp.

► LATERAL PULLDOWNS

(1) Sit down at the lat cable station and secure your thighs under the knee cushion. (2) Grasp a straight bar attachment with your hands shoulder-width apart, palms facing down. Your arms should be extended overhead. (3) Keeping your back straight, bring the bar down until it lightly touches the top of your chest, trying to keep your shoulder blades together. (4) With control, release and return the bar overhead.

► STANDING CABLE ROW

(1) Attach a straight bar to a low pulley. (2) Grasp the bar with your palms facing down, hands slightly wider than shoulder width. (3) Starting with the bar resting at midthigh, exhale and raise it up to just below your chin. As you draw your elbows up, the bar should remain close to your body. Pause at the top of the motion before returning to starting position.

► AGILITY LADDER ICKY SHUFFLE

(1) Stand slightly behind and to the left of a lengthwise ladder with your feet outside the first rung. (2) Leading with your right foot, step to the far right of the inside rung. Plant your left foot next to it (2 feet in). (3) Next, step your right foot to the outside of the ladder (1 foot out). (4) Lift and plant your left foot to the far left side of the second rung. The right foot should follow (2 feet in). (5) Continue this pattern through the ladder, then switch lead feet. (6) Once you have the steps down, run through this drill as fast as you can without hitting the ladder's edges. —A.N.



PICK YOUR POISON: OBSTACLE COURSE RACEFINDER

START HERE!
DO YOU WANT TO PLUNGE INTO A PIT OF MUD?

NO!

Do you wish to be cleaner when you finish the race?

YES

FOAM FEST 5K

Start the race by sloshing through a cloud of foam.

NO!

URBANATHLON SPRINT

You don't want to deal with mud, but you don't want soap, either. The city is the place for you. Run 3-5 road miles, jumping cars and crawling under barricades as you go.

YES

Are you a woman?

YES

Do you prefer a women's-only race?

YES

DIRTY GIRL MUD RUN

This gentle girls-only 5K gives you the thrill of the mud run with the power to say "Heck no" to obstacles that aren't your style.

NO!

Do you want to run a marathon with obstacles?

YES

SUPER VILLAIN RACE

26+ miles and 60+ obstacles.

THAT'S A THING?

Do you want to choose the obstacles you do?

NO!

YES

Are you up for 10-15 miles of trail running?

NO!

YES

MUDDERELLA

You're ready to be tested. Mud-derella will do just that. Designed for women, by women, this 5- to 7-mile course is packed with 12-15 obstacles.

NO!

Would you rather throw a spear at a giant target or crawl into a tunnel filled with tear gas?

SPEAR!

TEAR GAS!

TOUGH MUDDER

After the tear gas, live wires, and ice bath, get ready to throw yourself up 12-foot walls and complete 20+ obstacles on a 10- to 12-mile course.

How does 5-10 sound?

NO!

YES

Do you want to bring your dog?

YES

NO!

You miss!!!!!!
(Everyone does.) Do 30 burpees!!

Are you trying to complete a Spartan Trifecta?

YES

NO!

Do you have a sweet warrior beard?

NO!

YES

Pick one or do all three:

SAVAGE RACE

With the most obstacles per mile, these 4- to 6-mile courses are interval hell (in a good way!).

ATLAS BOSS

A nature lover's dream, these races are notorious for killer terrain.

SPARTAN SPRINT

This 3+ mile race packs in 20+ obstacles. Be ready for inclines, fire jumps, and elevated cargo nets.

BONUS: Was that too easy?

YES

How does running an obstacle course for 24 hours sound to you?

YES! I'M A BADASS!

SPARTAN DEATH RACE

Up to 70 hours of pain
TOUGHEST MUDDER
24 hours, double the obstacles
BATTLEFROG XTREME
The 8K course again and again...

YES

Seriously?

ZOMBIE MUD RUN

Wind your way through a maze haunted by the undead! This zombie-themed OCR 5K will eat your brain!

Hmmmm. Have you ever considered a road race?



Do you want to jump in a pool of blood, get an electric shock, and be chased by zombies?

YES

NO!

Do you want to climb a 30-foot rope, run up a mountain, and crawl under barbed wire?

NO!

YES

BADASS DASH K-9

The first OCR to let your loyal pal register!

Can you handle 3-5 miles?

YES

NO!

Try again!

NO!



BATTLEFROG 15K

Designed by the U.S. Navy SEALs, this course has water hazards at every turn. Be ready to carry 50-pound cans filled with liquid, uphill, while soaking wet.

SPARTAN SUPER

These 8-mile courses are usually hosted on mountains. With 25+ mud-soaked obstacles, this is the middle-distance Spartan.

WARRIOR DASH

A great intro to the OCR scene. Bearded ladies are welcomed, too.

LIKE CERTAIN DEATH.

word Spartan seriously, that using the name of the legendary army of the old world comes with a responsibility to make sure everyone perseveres through suffering, which gives participants a larger sense of pride when they finish, which is what causes them to come back and pay the large entry fee to do it again. (The business plan, in a nutshell.) “We want to take you to the edge of breaking, and then somehow you cross the finish,” he says.

“The beauty of Spartan is that it forces you to become uncomfortable somewhere,” Yan Martin told me. Martin was a road runner, and then a CrossFit guy, but his first Spartan race, he says, “forced me to consider what fitness meant.”

When I told him I was doing a Super, he went quiet. “A Super? God bless you. At least you picked a beautiful location.”

THE WAY Rebecca Golian explained the difference between Tough Mudder and Spartan was that the former had less-intense terrain but its obstacles were more “psychologically challenging.” There’s ice-cold water, for instance, or electrified lines that you have to dodge. “Spartan is about power, strength, and conditioning,” she said. Which isn’t to say that Spartan doesn’t mess with your head. There is the fear of the unknown, especially when the course is on a ski resort and seems to have no limit to the number of times it can force runners to ascend. And there is the fear of the burpee, the squat thrust/pushup/jumping jack mash-up invented in the 1930s by a physiologist with one of history’s greatest names, Royal Burpee, and the official punishment of the Spartan Race.

Any runner who fails an obstacle must do 30 burpees, and racers are warned that the volunteer “burpee police” will be watching to make sure no one cheats. In truth,

the burpee police couldn’t possibly count every drop, push, and jump because at any given obstacle, there will be a few to a crowd of racers suffering through a set. I do my first burpees after finishing that first ascent, along with my entire wave, when slippery conditions force marshals to close an obstacle. The next obstacle requires us to pick up a perfectly spherical rock about the size of a large beach ball, carry it 10 yards, do 10 burpees, then carry it back to the start, which begs the question: Where do you even buy large, perfectly spherical rocks that serve no apparent purpose other than this? (Turns out they’re Atlas stones, a favorite of mixed martial arts athletes.)

I do burpees again farther down the descent, when I fail a balance test that involves a short walk on a plank turned skinny-side up, followed by a short walk on a large rubber band. I nail back-to-back arm/shoulder tests—two variations of monkey bars, essentially—that I would never have been able to finish if not for Golian’s work, but fail miserably at a rope to hoop to swing contraption that my upper body will have no part of.

Everyone who talks about Spartan and the other obstacle races likes to point out how it’s a punishing test that regular people endure in large part because of the communal enthusiasm. Most people seem to run in pairs, or teams, but even those of us flying solo never feel alone. Because I am not the kind of person who reads instructions, I didn’t know that I should have worn a Camelbak. But the few times when I feel most parched, someone notices, and offers me a swig. Misery loves company.

THE SECOND TIME we climb Tremblant from bottom to top is annoying and it seems, in defiance of fact and reason, steeper and

On the second climb up Mont Tremblant, racers got frisky with snowballs.



THE OCR SUPERSTAR

How Amelia Boone came to run

A self-described jack-of-all-trades athlete, Amelia Boone (this month’s cover subject) came onto the OCR scene almost by accident when a coworker talked her into a Tough Mudder in 2011. In December that same year, she signed up for the World’s Toughest Mudder, a 24-hour race, and placed second among women. She went on to win that race in 2012 and 2014 and was named The Spartan World Champion in 2013. “OCRs got me hooked on running trails and mountains,” she says. “I’m good at climbing and running steep inclines, and powering through altitude changes.”

Now a Reebok Spartan elite athlete, the Chicago-based corporate attorney, 31, recently added ultrarunning to her repertoire. “Before I started doing obstacle races, I ran to keep in shape,” Boone says, “but I didn’t feel the need to sign up for races.” In March 2015, she completed the 68-mile Georgia Death Race in 15:38:48, good for third woman overall. “The longer obstacle courses I did gave me confidence in my endurance,” she says. “So I felt like an ultramarathon was a natural transition.”

After a summer filled with OCRs, Boone is looking forward to the Barkley Fall Classic 50K this September. “Trails give me an opportunity to get away from the city life and off the pavement. I experience the full engagement of running—being in tune with my body mechanics and the environment.” Plus, she likes the scene. “Trail races have a similar social camaraderie to obstacle races.”

Boone’s advice for OCR newbies? “The best way to get started is to sign up with friends.” —A.N.

ALL HEART ALL AT YOUR WRIST



Forerunner 225 with wrist-based heart rate.

Hate wrestling with a heart rate strap on the run? We get it — so we got rid of it. We even refined how this watch gauges your effort, so you don't have to decide if 176 beats per minute means you're cookin' or almost cooked. Create customized workouts or download free training plans at Garmin Connect, send to your watch and get coach-like guidance.

See it at Garmin.com/forerunner

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Forerunner® 225



A racer crossing the finish line receives a medal from a caped volunteer.

longer than the first time; the last section of that climb feels like walking up a black diamond slope that if you were on skis and fell you'd fall a long way before stopping. But the third trip up, that one is just cruel.

I bump into my wife after coming down the mountain the second time—which is possibly even harder on the legs—and subsequently failing three consecutive obstacles, which results in 90 burpees. These being self-policed, I probably do more like 70, but that is still about 67 more than I feel like doing, and the end result is a sort of total-body exhaustion that makes even my thoughts sloppy and tired.

"Don't worry, baby," my wife says. "It's almost over. You just have to go up that hill there, and do a couple more obstacles." I look where she is pointing. It did appear as if—after I finished a 20-foot rope climb, a wall traverse that was essentially lateral bouldering, and a hoist of a sand-filled barrel—there was only a little bit of up- and downhill remaining. So I am not as demoralized as I might have been upon failing to climb the rope or do the traverse without falling, resulting in 60 more burpees. (Full disclosure: probably more like 50.)

Then I see a guy with a shaved head who has just finished and looks surprisingly fresh and cheerful. I ask if he could grab me some water from the stash across a fence, and mention that I am glad to be almost done. "Hardly, dude," he says. "You have to go up again." But, I say, it couldn't be as bad as the last ascent. He laughs. "It's worse, man. Longer. Steeper."


For the third and final time we go from base to summit, this time as quivering, demoralized shells of our former selves. The hike is barely a walk. It is more like a trudge, with frequent stops to sit and ponder why the hell any of us are doing this. It feels like a forced march, and I guess it kind of is—a long and sad trail of people laboring just to

take steps. All the while, those chirpy Canadian birds are singing, only it is much less endearing this time. *Why are they taunting me, I think. Why are they so happy? Man, those birds are dicks.*

What is increasingly apparent as the race goes on is that the obstacles, which are intimidating in theory, aren't at all the worst part of this race. The course—that is the real monster. Every time the bedraggled line of us reaches a crest, or a corner, we think it's the end. There is a brief moment of hope, the kind you feel every time a plate of food exits the kitchen when you

go to a restaurant starving, followed by the inevitable crush of disappointment. My quads and hamstrings feel like they are on the verge of revolt, so I sit down for at least five minutes. Then a woman who'd been running with her boyfriend in my general vicinity comes up and offers me a hand. "The longer you sit, the harder it's going to be to get up," she says. "I don't want to have to send the medics. Plus, I've been promised water at the top."

A few minutes later, we actually do reach the summit, where there is indeed a glorious oasis in the form of a woman in the bed of a Spartan-logo'd pickup truck handing out water, and from there it is literally all downhill, on legs that barely have the strength to flex and hold on the steep and slippery slope that is no doubt chosen precisely because the footing is precarious. Most people are walking, without the least bit of shame. At this juncture, finishing is the point, and barring some freak accident, we were all going to make it. Finally, nearly four hours and 20 minutes after I set out, the trees clear and there is the finish, next to a ski lift station, with only a pile of flaming logs between me and mercy. I am nearly an hour slower than I thought I'd be, and I don't care at all.

When I talk to De Sena a few days later, he confirms what I already suspected. My experience was exactly the idea. "You hated us when you were out there, and you probably still hated us a little at the finish line," he says. "But that fades over time, and it's addictive." The course designers are told to push people as far as possible without making any one thing too hard for a normal human. Each component part is doable; it's the combination that sucks, purposely so. "I still suffer when I do it," De Sena says. "I don't want Leonidis to turn over in his grave." 



HOLD THE MUD

City races that let you test your mettle without getting (too) dirty

► MEN'S HEALTH URBANATHLON

New York: October 24, 2015; San Francisco: November 22, 2015
Run over taxis, then hurdle over construction cones. With two distances to choose from, 10 to 12 miles with 14 obstacles or three to five with seven obstacles, participants traverse stadium stairs, scale an eight-foot wall, and climb cargo nets. In "Burnin' Rubber," racers crawl under police barricades using only their hands and feet, then high-knee through a dozen tires and repeat. menshealthurbanathlon.com; \$115

► URBAN RAID

5 locations, August to November
Participants run 3.1 miles and conquer 10 obstacles. Depending on location, the race is held on city streets or sandy beaches. Features include a free-hanging rope ladder, slack line balance beam, tire flips, and sandbag carries. Failure to complete an obstacle results in 10 burpees. Enter as a team or individually. raidevents.com; \$55

► URBAN MUDDER

Inaugural event will take place in NYC in July 2015; Several North American cities, summer of 2016

With the same emphasis on camaraderie, team building, and fun as its cousin Tough Mudder, the Urban is an untimed obstacle challenge. Five-mile courses take place on paved roadways, where racers swing on a trapeze bar and aim their bodies at a target. There is also a field of lasers to maneuver through, brick walls to scale, platforms to bound from, and a giant, inflatable airbag landing to bounce back to street level. urbanmudder.com; \$115 —A.N.

PROMOTION



YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT

Our half marathon is only part of the fun. Check out all the events and [register today.](#)



There's more to the Runner's World Half & Festival than meets the eye. In fact, it's a whole weekend of nonstop activity for runners and their families. Plus, you can enjoy dinner with the editors, attend informative seminars, and groove to live music on Sunday. It may be a HALF Festival, but it's a WHOLE lot of fun. Join us!



Half marathon, 10K, 5K, Altra Trail Run, Free Kids Run, and Dog Run

Informative seminars on all things running

Dinner with the editors

Great live music and food

Join us...for one great time after another.

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[Register today at: RWHALF.COM](#)

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ease of use.*





REAL BRA- VADO

**The latest crop of
sports bras delivers
style, performance,
and a healthy dose
of attitude.**

**BY KELLY BASTONE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM CORBETT**

G

{ Best for a/b }

Great sports bras are more than mere garments. They're engineering marvels that can help runners extend their workouts, improve running form, and even avoid injury. Researchers at the University of Portsmouth in England found that excessive breast movement can result in heavier, injury-promoting landings. But a properly fitted bra can reduce breast bounce by half, making it one of the best investments a runner can make. Happily, our team of a dozen sports-bra testers—who ranged in size from 34A to 36DD—analyzed 49 different bra models and discovered that the top performers don't always command top dollar.



TESTERS' FAVORITE
C9 Champion Enthusiast
Racerback Bra

- Comfortable, flattering, and supportive, Target's bargain model beat out bras costing twice as much. "It's not tight and compressive, yet it eliminates bounce on high-impact runs," said a B-cup tester. The seamless construction feels like a second skin (testers saw no hot spots). And the best part? Removable pads and gathered seams eliminate the dreaded uniboob. \$17; XS-XXL



MINIMALIST
Zensah
Racey Bra

- Despite its skimpy coverage (with a plunging neckline and keyhole cutout in the back), this seamless pullover proved supportive enough for B-cup runners. "It's light, breathable, and superstretchy, so it's a cinch to take off at the end of a workout," said a tester. Minimal coverage makes it ideal for hot weather, but some testers deemed it too revealing without a shirt. \$40; S-L



ADJUSTABLE RACERBACK
SmartWool PhD
Seamless Strappy Bra

- "So comfortable!" crooned one tester, who wore this merino wool bra during her morning run—and kept it on all day. Adjustable straps dial in a perfect fit, and the bottom band provides chafe-free support (enough to make jumping rope comfortable for our A-cup tester). Two layers of fabric (rather than sweat-trapping foam cups) eliminate "headlights." \$60; XS-L



STRAPPY AND STYLISH
Oiselle Classic
Verrazano Bra

- Not just a fashion statement, this pullover provides ample support for tempo workouts and long runs. "I experienced no chafing or other discomfort, even though the straps are on the skinny side," said one B-cup tester. Subtle, removable padding creates a flattering profile, but the thick fabric reduces breathability. \$42; 2-10



BEST WICKING
Craft Cool
Seamless Bra

- Thanks to a meshy weave and channeled fibers that wick sweat fast, this racerback manages moisture better than any other bra we tested. "I felt totally dry during and after my workout," said a tester, who found the stretchy fabric to be comfy enough for day-long wear (yet supportive enough for running). \$60; S/M-L/XL



MOST FLATTERING
New Balance
Shapely Shaper

- Even small-breasted runners enjoy some va-voom with this pullover racerback, which uses separate, molded cups and removable pads to create an ultraflattering silhouette. Plus, it performs: "I did not experience any bounce or chafing," said a B-cup tester, who also praised the quick-dry fabric. \$48; XS-L

STYLING BY SHEA DASPIN, HAIR & MAKEUP BY MARY GUTHRIE FOR ABTP.COM; OPENING SPREAD: CLOTHING, FROM LEFT: STURDY GIRL, TANK BRA, CG BRA, SMARTWOOL BRA, ATHLETA CAPRI, NIKE SHORTS; ACCESSORIES: SUUNTO WATCH, SATYA NECKLACE, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS, BASIS WATCH, SATYA BRACELET, RUE GEMMON NECKLACE, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS, LULULEMON HEADBAND, MIO WATCH, RUE GEMMON CUFF, MANIANI BRACELET, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS AND RINGS

NEW BALANCE BRA, ROXY SHORTS, RUE GEMBON NECKLACE, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS, OAKLEY SUNGLASSES, BASIS WATCH, SATYA BRACELET

*Lauren Williams
likes half
marathons and
running in New
York's Central
Park.*

{ Best for c/d }



TESTERS' FAVORITE
SmartWool PhD
Support Bra

• Everything about this merino wool bra delighted its testers, from its flattering shape to its superior comfort. The fabric is soft, the neckline is high enough for containment (but not too high), the adjustable bottom band and shoulder straps provide a customized fit, and nonstretchy, molded cups let D-cup testers run long with minimal bounce. \$80; 34B–38C



BEST VENTILATION
Shock Absorber
Ultimate Run Bra

• Two sets of clasps (on the bottom band and upper back) make this bra more onerous to put on, but once testers started running, they ranked it tops for both support and ventilation. "It's light and airy, and I did not experience any chafing or bounce at all," said one tester. Another tester even found relief from chronic soreness in the shoulders. \$79; 30A–38I



MAX ADJUSTABILITY
Sugoi RSR
Impact Bra

• Choices, choices: The straps convert from vertical to crossback, the modesty pads are removable for improved breathability, and the adjustable rib cage band and straps dial in a comfy fit. The meshy neckline is both flattering and ventilating, but testers wished for softer seaming on the bottom band. \$55; 34B–38D



BEST VALUE
Brooks Moving Comfort
UpLift Crossback Bra

• "I was able to focus on running without worrying about bounce," said one C-cup tester, who praised this bra's ability to keep her feeling cool and dry throughout her runs and circuit-training classes. Soft fabrics and seams work together to prevent chafing, and the sturdy straps look cute, not brawny. \$48; XS–XL



*Lauren Berlingeri
competed in
track in both high
school and college
but now prefers to
run on trails.*

{ Best for d/cld }



EASY ON/OFF Champion Zip Sports Bra

• The front zip looks sassy and makes for no-hassle removal—even after sweat-soaked workouts. Adjustable racerback straps stay firmly in place, and their meshy fabric kept testers cool throughout hot midday runs. “No bounce, no chafing,” reported one tester. \$42; S–XL



BOUNCE ELIMINATOR Lululemon Ta-Ta Tamer II

• If zero bounce is your priority, this bra delivers. “Fit is very snug and rigid, with very little give in the bottom band,” reported one D-cup marathoner. Vertical shoulder straps convert to a crossback, and the combo of side compression and molded cups is figure-flattering. “I look like a Cosmo cover girl,” said one tester. \$58; 32–36C to DD, 38C–D

Anna Clement does a combo jog/walk three days a week, covering around four miles each time.



DAYLONG COMFORT Lynx Sportswear Ladder Back Bra

• Often, the most supportive bras aren’t the most comfortable—but the innovative Ladder Back is so wearable, testers kept it on for hours after their run. “It feels breathable and stretchy,” said one, who liked the freedom of movement provided by rows of elastic in the back. The quick-dry, sweat-wicking fabric minimizes clamminess. Bounce is negligible. \$60; 28C–44F



WINNER!

TESTERS’ FAVORITE Sturdy Girl Dallas Tank Bra

• This tank-style bra is comfy and supportive—and doesn’t employ the orthopedic styling so typical of bras for larger cup sizes. “The first bra I’ve found that I’d wear without a shirt,” said one DD tester, who found the compression and encapsulation “flattering.” \$79; 32C–38DD



SIMPLE STABILITY CW-X Xtra Support III

• Most pullover, tank-style bras don’t deliver enough support for large-breasted runners, but this one, while it didn’t eliminate bounce, “really minimized it,” said a DD tester. Some testers reported that it created little separation (yep, uniboob), but others gave it props for the simplicity of its design. \$60; 34B/C–38DD

LEFT PAGE: LULULEMON BRA AND SHORTS; MIO WATCH, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS AND RINGS, LULULEMON HEADBAND, RUE GEMMON CUFF, MIANSAL BRACELET
THIS PAGE: ATHLETA CAPRIS, SUUNTO WATCH, SATYA NECKLACE, ERICA WEINER EARRINGS



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—KATE C.

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This early fall race takes runners past landmarks dating back to the late 1800s.



VICTORIA MARATHON

October 11, Victoria, British Columbia
runvictoriamarathon.com

SMELL THE FLOWERS

Unwind before or after the race at tranquil Butchart Gardens. Dahlias, maple trees, and beech trees will be in full fall mode, with lots of reds, yellows, and oranges. butchartgardens.com

There's no shortage of stuff to do in Victoria, British Columbia. The provincial capital on the southern tip of Vancouver Island offers kayaking, canoeing, sailing, fishing, and hiking, and bills itself as "the cycling capital of Canada," thanks to miles of paths and trails. So it's no surprise that this active-person's paradise hosts a marathon every October, when temps (usually in the 50s) are PR perfect. The course rolls up and down minor hills and sports views of the Pacific Ocean, the Olympic Mountain Range, and government buildings dating back to 1897. You have to take a plane or a ferry to reach the city, but it's worth the trip. On the following page, Victoria Marathon veterans tell you why. ➔



● COLORFUL SPECTATORS

"Near the 5K mark, you run through 200-acre Beacon Hill Park. It's right near downtown, but it has wild peacocks running around [which were brought into the park when it housed a zoo more than a century ago]. Runners in front of you will yell, 'Peacock up!' to warn you if one is near the path, but they aren't threatening at all."

—JUDI SIGURDSON, 51, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

● SMALL RACE, BIG PERKS

"I have run marathons with 30,000 people, and this race [which 1,500 runners finished last year] is on par with those big-city events. The quality of the medal and the swag—instead of a shirt, finishers get a New Balance jacket—are the same as or better than what bigger races offer. The fact that our little Victoria can throw a race with such attention to detail is just one way you can tell we take our running seriously: Within 10 square miles of my house, there are at least five different running stores."

—CAROL HOWARD, 52, VICTORIA

● LIKEABLE LOCALS

"There is a lot of old English influence in Victoria [which was founded as a British fort and trading outpost in the mid-19th century]. It's a very quaint city, with polite Canadian residents. If we pass another runner on the course, we tell them we're sorry (no joke). The race has an incredible cadre of volunteers, and all of them are so enthusiastic, even if you're near the tail end of the pack like me."

—BRENDA SIMEONI, 66, VICTORIA

● TASTY REWARDS

"I'm a fan of having a postrace beer, and Victoria is a microbrewing paradise [with more than 10 local breweries to choose from]. The Fat Tug IPA from Driftwood Brewery is a personal favorite. After a marathon you're going to want to pair a pint with a benny [Canadian for 'eggs Benedict'] or an omelet—that's what we eat after a long run."

—NATHAN KAMELL, 38, VICTORIA

● ISLAND WEATHER

"Don't believe what your iPhone app tells you, and don't despair if conditions aren't ideal at the start—the weather in Victoria is unpredictable and likes to keep us on our toes. I've seen a perfect sunny day turn into a downpour, then a hailstorm, and back to sunshine and rainbows all within the hour."

—GILLIAN PAGE JEFFERSON, 27, VICTORIA

TASTE THE HOPS

Postrace, head to Spinnakers Brewpub, which taps more than a dozen house-brewed beers. Pair one with a farm-to-table menu item like the pulled-pork nachos. spinnakers.com



Ask a Nutritionist

Lisa Dorfman explains how to hydrate on hot race days

How much should I drink midrace in the summer?

One to two ounces every 20 minutes—about one big gulp of fluid. If it's sweltering, I'd drink a gulp every mile. But just like eating before a race—where you should feel satisfied but not full—drink liquids in moderation. It shouldn't feel like a washing machine in your stomach.

What is the ideal balance of water and sports drink midrace?

If your race lasts less than an hour, you don't need calories midrace. In longer races, sip a sports drink or gel at every other water station, and always wash it down with water. Your body can process only about a gram of sugar per minute: Too much can overwhelm your digestive system, which hinders its ability to absorb fluids and can lead to dehydration.

Should I carry my own water or sports drink?

Maybe—if you've trained with a handheld water bottle or other hydration system. But toting that extra weight can throw your gait off. If you're worried about not getting enough from water stops, ask people to meet you with water along the way. If that's not possible, carry it—it's better to be safe than dehydrated.

Lisa Dorfman is a Miami-based sports nutritionist, Ironman triathlete, and author of *Performance Nutrition for Tackling Stress*.

Miles on Isles Enjoy water views from these island courses.

BEAVER ISLAND HALF MARATHON

Accessible by boat or air, Beaver Island sits about 32 miles from mainland Michigan. The flat, looped course follows roads and trails along Lake Michigan, through forest, and past Font Lake, the island's mile-long lake.

September 5, Beaver Island, Michigan
beaverisland.org/run



NANTUCKET HALF MARATHON

This gently rolling course forms a loop around the less inhabited southern section of the island. It travels through neighborhoods and along 2,000 acres of untouched conservation land with views of the Atlantic.

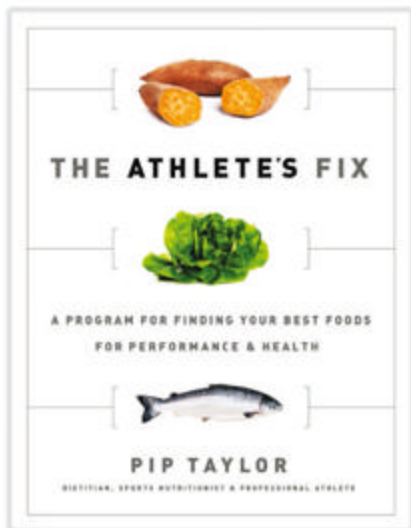
October 11, Nantucket, Massachusetts
nantuckethalfmarathon.com

UNDER THE OAKS 10K

In the early 20th century, some of the country's wealthiest families (think Vanderbilt and Pulitzer) vacationed on Jekyll Island, in the Atlantic just off Georgia's coast. It now hosts a 10K beneath a palatial canopy of oak trees.

October 10, Jekyll Island, Georgia
undertheoaksrun.com

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● CONTINUED FROM PAGE 80

Valerio loved it. “I fell in love with the usual things,” she says. “The endorphins, the goal setting, the way running evened out my thinking, the taste of the air at dawn.”

At Valerio’s prodding, she and Buccello graduated to 10Ks. Then, over her friend’s protests, Valerio entered them in a 15-mile trail race at the Jersey Shore, which they drove to amid a wild thunderstorm. “Let’s go home,” Buccello said. “No way they’re going to have the race in this weather.”

“Maybe it’ll clear up,” Valerio said.

But the storm raged even stronger at the shore. The race was canceled and the women drove home. “I was relieved, but Mirna was really bummed,” Buccello remembers. “She was so disappointed that I let her talk me into meeting at 6 o’clock the next morning to run 15 miles on our own. She was so excited about getting that run in that I did my best to suffer in silence.”

As the summer wore on, the legend of Mirna Valerio grew. Colleagues from work and their families came out to road races to cheer the women. Valerio dropped a total of 27 pounds, getting down to the 270 range. Her blood pressure, resting heart rate, and cholesterol readings dropped down to healthy levels, and the dangerous inflammation in her arteries calmed. Perhaps most gratifying, her doctor struck the “morbidly obese” diagnosis from Valerio’s medical chart.

WE HAVE NOW REACHED the climax of the standard weight-loss narrative, when the cascade effects of running, healthy eating, and other positive changes produce a metabolic sea-change. The former fatty continues to shed her avoirdupois, transforming into a new woman. She goes from 240 to 120, and from size 18 to size 8. Her PRs drop in tandem with her BMI; she qualifies for Boston. Calories out exceed calories in: a morality tale we have read hundreds of times, often in the pages of *Runner’s World*.

But instead of continuing on the familiar arc, the story of Mirna Valerio hits an impasse; one possibly more common than a Disney-style breakthrough, but much less publicized. Valerio had embraced every

aspect of the running life, from training to racing to nutrition. She had even started coaching her school’s cross-country team. But while no longer morbidly obese, she remained obese.

“No matter how much I run and work out, my weight never goes below around 240 pounds,” Valerio says. “I don’t know why. I eat a lot of healthy food, but no more than most skinny distance runners I know, and I don’t secretly binge on pizza and cookies and potato chips. I’m just not interested in starving myself on some 1500-calorie-a-day plan, losing a bunch of weight, then gaining it right back because my diet is totally unrealistic.”

Valerio’s supporters say she has worked her weight to a healthy, sustainable set point. Her critics could insist that by accepting obesity, she also accepts a greater chance of debilitating disease, and the likelihood of a significantly shorter life span.

However, ideas ranging from a round earth to women’s suffrage were also once novel and unsettling. Recent scientific evidence reveals a few provocative truths: What you do is more important than what you weigh; and what you weigh is determined by myriad factors, some beyond an individual’s control.

“I’D NEVER SAY weight doesn’t matter,” says Martha Gulati, M.D., director of the Women’s Cardiovascular Health Program at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. “Weight will always influence a number of important health variables. But compared to the effect of exercise, weight and BMI have been proven to be secondary. By far, physical activity and physical fitness has been shown to be the single most important factor in maintaining good health, regardless of one’s body weight.”

Early this year, a study of 300,000 men and women in Europe conducted by U.K. researchers at the University of Cambridge found that twice as many deaths may be linked to lack of physical activity compared with the number of deaths linked to obesity. The study also found that a modest amount of physical activity, the equivalent of a brisk daily 20-minute walk, produced significant health benefits, even for people with a high BMI.

Long-term studies by the Cooper Clinic in Dallas found that the death rate for adults who are thin but unfit was at least twice that of fit obese individuals, and that fitness provided protection against early death regardless of body weight.

In short, exercise in general, including moderate exercise such as walking and vigorous exercise such as running, benefits everybody, regardless of weight. By

the same token, physical activity, not diet, forms the behavioral key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

By this logic, weight control would seem to be a simple matter of calories in/calories out. Burn more calories than you consume, and your body will adapt by burning fat. The pounds will drop away and you can buy new clothes, and stand a better shot at rewards ranging from getting promoted to getting a date. It seems an ineluctable law of physics, a *Biggest Loser* calculus relentlessly drummed into our brains by the American media. Hence the suspicion that dogs Mirna Valerio: If she runs so much, how can she still be fat?

“If controlling obesity were a simple matter of calories in and calories out,” says Ludwig, “I would be out of a job.”

“The calories-in/calories-out idea is ridiculously simplistic,” says Freedhoff. “It’s like a financial adviser telling an investor to buy low and sell high.”

Ludwig explains that weight loss, gain, and control are complex biological processes. “It’s a combination of genetic, behavioral, environmental, and psychological factors, and varies tremendously from individual to individual,” he says. “In many ways, obesity is similar to complex diseases such as cancer.”

Dr. Steven Blair, P.E.D., the lead author of the Cooper Clinic studies who is now a professor in the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina, agrees. “If you fashioned a hypothetical world in which every person ran 10 miles a day and subsisted on the same daily ration of carrots, you would still have a full range of body types, from svelte to stout.”

“Imagine our bodies as cars,” Freedhoff says. “They come out of the factory with various fuel efficiencies—an SUV’s is always going to be different than a subcompact’s. How you drive definitely affects mileage, but the SUV is never going to burn less fuel than the subcompact.

“Well, just like cars, our bodies are all wired with their own distinctive genetic makeups. We can modify our BMI through exercise and diet, but only to an extent. Some of us are subcompacts, others are SUVs, and one type isn’t inherently ‘better’ than another. We can be healthy and happy no matter how much we weigh.”

Mirna Valerio has been wise enough and brave enough to strike this balance. Through years of hard but mostly happy work, she has attained her own healthy weight. She accepts herself without being satisfied with herself. “Instead of wondering, *If she runs so much, how come she’s not skinny?* we could be wondering, *How heavy would she be if she* (Continued on page 108)



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SEP 6 - Gatorade/Steelers 5K
Pittsburgh, PA
Contact: Pittsburgh Steelers,
100 Art Rooney Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212.
(412) 697-7713
5k@steelers.com
www.steelers.com/5k


**SEP 6 - Mt. Nittany Marathon to benefit
the Mount Nittany Conservancy**
State College, PA
Contact: John Hook,
P.O. Box 334, State College, PA 16804.
(814) 404-5314
john@mntnittany.org
www.mtnittany.org/marathon/

**SEP 20 - Navy Air Force Half Marathon
& Navy 5 Miler**
Washington, DC
Contact: Joint Base Anacostia Bolling MWR,
12 Brookley Ave., Washington, DC 20032.
navyairforcehalfmarathon@gmail.com
www.navyairforcehalfmarathon.com

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Management,
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SEP 7 - 37th Annual Franklin Classic, 10K, 5K & 1K Kid's Fun Run

Franklin, TN
Contact: Brittney Jerkins,
 Mercy Community Healthcare,
 1113 Murfreesboro Road, Suite 319,
 Franklin, TN 37064.
 (615) 790-0567 ext. 240
 brittneyj@mercytn.org
 www.franklinclassic.org

SEP 12 - Divas® Half Marathon & 5K in Peachtree City

Peachtree City, GA
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 Management,
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SEP 25-26 - Divas® Half Marathon & 5K in DC's Wine Country

Loudoun County, VA
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 Management,
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 info@runlikeadiva.com
 www.runlikeadiva.com

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OCT 3-4 - Crawlin' Crab Half Marathon, 5K, 1K & Challenge

Hampton, VA
Contact: J&A Racing,
 3601 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.
 (757) 412-1056
 info@crawlinrabhalf.com
 www.crawlinrabhalf.com

OCT 17-18 - Myrtle Beach Mini Marathon - Half Marathon, Coastal 5K & Doggie Dash

Myrtle Beach, SC
Contact: Continental Event & Sports
 Management,
 P.O. Box 56-1154, Miami, FL 33256-1154.
 info@runmyrtlebeach.com
 www.runmyrtlebeach.com

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OCT 18 - 7 Bridges Marathon, Half Marathon, 5K & 1K

Chattanooga, TN
Contact: Ken Radley,
 Coolidge Park,
 (423) 400-6897
 director@sceniccitymultisport.com
 www.sevenbridgesmarathon.com

OCT 31 - Anthem Wicked 10K

Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: J&A Racing,
 3601 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.
 (757) 412-1056
 info@wicked10k.com
 www.wicked10k.com

NOV 8 - Port City Orthopaedics Battleship Half Marathon & 5K

Wilmington, NC
Contact: Ed Fore,
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 (910) 398-5539
 edfore7628@bellsouth.net
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NOV 14 - Anthem Richmond Marathon, Half Marathon & 8K

Richmond, VA
Contact: Race Director,
 100 Avenue of Champions,
 Richmond, VA 23230.
 (804) 285-9495
 marathon@sportsbackers.org
 www.richmondmarathon.org

NOV 21-22 - Blue Moon Harbor Lights Half Marathon, 5K, 1 Mile & Challenge

Norfolk, VA
Contact: J&A Racing,
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DEC 5 - TN Sports Medicine Mt. Juliet Half Marathon & 5K presented by LC

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DEC 12 - Rocket City Marathon

Huntsville, AL
Contact: Suzanne Taylor,
 2722 Carl T Jones Drive, Suite 2B,
 Huntsville, AL 35802.
 (256) 520-0768
 suzanne@fleetfeethuntsville.com
 www.runrocketcity.com

FEB 7, 2016 - Publix Florida Marathon & Half Marathon

Melbourne, FL
Contact: Mitch Varnes,
 P.O. Box 33100, Indialantic, FL 32903.
 (321) 759-7200
 www.thefloridamarathon.com

Beautiful Waterfront Course on Space Coast

MAY 1, 2016 - Divas® Half Marathon & 5K in North Myrtle Beach

North Myrtle Beach, SC
Contact: Continental Event & Sports
 Management,
 P.O. Box 56-1154, Miami, FL 33256-1154.
 info@runlikeadiva.com
 www.runlikeadiva.com
Save 10% - Use RWNMBAUG15 (Exp. 08/31/15)

NORTH CENTRAL

AUG 22 - Go Far Woman Half Marathon, Relay, 10K & 5K

Fargo, ND
Contact: Sue Knutson,
 405 W Main Ave., #1-D,
 West Fargo, ND 58078.
 701-371-5158
 sue@gofarevents.com
 www.gofarwoman.com

SEP 12 - Dick Beardsley Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & 5K

Detroit Lakes, MN
Contact: Mark Knutson,
 405 W Main Ave., #1-D,
 West Fargo, ND 58078.
 (701) 238-1900
 mark@gofarevents.com
 www.dbmarathon.com

Inaugural Dick Beardsley Marathon - Take the Lake!

SEP 26 - Akron Marathon (Rubber City Race Series), Marathon, Half Marathon, Team Relay & Kids Fun Run

Akron, OH
Contact: Brian Polen, Race Director,
 453 S. High St., Suite 301,
 Akron, OH 44311.
 (877) 375-2786
 info@akronmarathon.org
 www.rubbercityraceseries.org

OCT 17 - Fargo Mini Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & 5K

Fargo, ND
Contact: Mark Knutson,
 405 W Main Ave., #1-D,
 West Fargo, ND 58078.
 (701) 238-1900
 mark@gofarevents.com
 www.fargominimarathon.com

OCT 17-18 - IMT Des Moines Marathon, Half Marathon, Relay, 5K & Kids Run

Des Moines, IA
Contact: Chris Burch,
 526 39th St., Des Moines, IA 50312.
 (515) 288-2692
 info@desmoinesmarathon.com
 www.desmoinesmarathon.com

Check out the I-35 Challenge.

SOUTH CENTRAL

SEP 19-20 - Plano Balloon Festival Half Marathon, 5K & 1K presented by Advil

Plano, TX
Contact: On Your Left! Marketing & Events,
 703 McKinney Avenue, Suite 201,
 Dallas, TX 75202.
 (214) 339-7867
 info@oylmarketing.com
 www.planoballoonfest.org

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DEC 13 - Baylor Scott & White BCS Marathon & Half Marathon

College Station, TX
Contact: Bob Appleton,
PO Box 3005, Bryan, TX 77805.
info@bcsmarathon.com
www.bcsmarathon.com
Save \$5 Promocode BCSRW15

JAN 9, 2016 - Mississippi Blues Marathon, Half Marathon, Quarter Marathon & Relay

Jackson, MS
Contact: John Noblin
info@msbluesmarathon.com
www.msbluesmarathon.com

JAN 15-17, 2016 - The Louisiana Marathon, Half Marathon, Quarter Marathon, 5K & Kids Marathon

Baton Rouge, LA
Contact: Danny Bourgeois,
721 Government St., Suite 103, Box 295,
Baton Rouge, LA 70802.
(504) 669-1530
danny@thelouisianamarathon.com
www.thelouisianamarathon.com

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APR 24, 2016 - Divas® Half Marathon & 5K in Galveston

Galveston, TX
Contact: Continental Event & Sports Management,
P.O. Box 56-1154, Miami, FL 33256-1154.
info@runlikeadiva.com
www.runlikeadiva.com
Save 10% - Use RWTXAUG15 (Exp. 08/31/15)

MOUNTAIN PACIFIC

SEP 12 - REVEL Big Cottonwood Marathon & Half Marathon

Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: Race Director
(720) 467-2188
bigcottonwood@runrevel.com
www.runrevel.com

OCT 4 - Portland Marathon & Half Marathon

Portland, OR
Contact: Les Smith,
200 SW Market St., Suite 1900,
Portland, OR 97201.
(503) 248-1134 or (503) 816-3777
lsmith@bullardlaw.com
www.portlandmarathon.org

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OCT 9-11 - Lake Tahoe Marathon & Half Marathon, 3 Marathons, 4-Person Marathon Relay, 3 Half Marathons, 20 Miler, 10K, 5K, 72 Mile Ultra, Double Marathon, Kids Fun Run, 5 Mile Kayak and SUP & Swim Races

South Lake Tahoe, CA
Contact: Les Wright,
P.O. Box 20000, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.
(530) 559-2261
leswright@sbcglobal.net
www.runtahoe.com

NOV 8 - City of Santa Clarita Marathon, Half Marathon, Relay, 5K & Kid's Run

Santa Clarita, CA
Contact: Patrick Downing,
20880 Centre Pointe Pky.,
Santa Clarita, CA 91350.
(661) 250-3783
pdowning@santa-clarita.com
www.scmarathon.org

JAN 17, 2016 - Maui OceanFront Marathon, Half Marathon, 15K, 10K, 5K & The Free Cookie Fun Run

Lahaina, HI
Contact: Les Wright,
P.O. Box 20000, So. Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.
(530) 559-2261
runmaui@gmail.com
www.runmaui.com

JAN 17, 2016 - Tri-City Medical Center Carlsbad Marathon, Half Marathon & Kid's Run

Carlsbad, CA
Contact: In Motion, Inc.,
6116 Innovation Way, Carlsbad, CA 92009.
(760) 692-2900
info@inmotionevents.com
www.carlsbadmarathon.com
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FEB 14, 2016 - Lost Dutchman Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & 8K Trail Run

Apache Junction, AZ
Contact: Lost Dutchman Marathon,
P.O. Box 6417, Apache Junction, AZ 85178.
contact@lostdutchmanmarathon.org
www.lostdutchmanmarathon.org

INTERNATIONAL

NOV 8 - Divas® Half Marathon & 5K in Puerto Rico

San Juan, Puerto Rico
Contact: Continental Event & Sports Management,
P.O. Box 56-1154, Miami, FL 33256-1154.
info@runlikeadiva.com
www.runlikeadiva.com
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NOV 8 - Athens Marathon, 10K & 5K, Original Historical Course

Athens, Greece
Contact: Apostolos Greek Tours Inc.,
2685 S. Dayton Way #14, Denver, CO 80231.
(303) 755-2888
www.athensmarathon.com
Various Support Packages.

● CONTINUED FROM PAGE 102

didn't run?" says Blair. *"Is she a good person? Is she active, healthy, and contributing to the world?"* Those questions are far more pertinent and interesting than asking what she weighs."

"A woman like Mirna makes an excellent role model," Ludwig says. "She reinforces the fundamentals: Work out, be active, and eat a high-quality diet. Weight loss should be the by-product of a healthy life, not the goal."

AT 6 O'CLOCK in the morning, her headlamp lancing the predawn darkness, Mirna Valerio stands in the parking lot above the track at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, meeting Rebecca Smith and three other women teachers, regulars in the running group that Valerio joined when she came to the school two years before.

At first she had resisted the Rabun Gap recruiter—"the last thing I wanted was to live in the South"—but she came down for a visit and was impressed by the educational philosophy, the elegant campus, the access to mountain running trails, and the chance for Rashid to go to school at a reduced tuition rate.

In 2011, Valerio launched her first marathon campaign, aiming for the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. "The marathon was a big step for me," she says. "I realized I was at risk, so I went to a pulmonologist, told him what I'd been doing, and what I had planned. 'So am I going to drop dead?' I asked him. He said, 'Seriously? No way!' Due to all the changes I had made, my chances of dropping dead were greatly reduced. He told me to go for it."

Valerio started training in her thorough manner, using a plan from Jenny Hadfield and John Bingham. Everything was going fine until she rolled her ankle on a downhill during a half marathon. X-rays showed an avulsion fracture. With only eight weeks until the marathon, Valerio was devastated. She went to an orthopedist who was also a runner. "She gave me a cross-training program and said I could still do my marathon after three weeks in a boot and no running for eight weeks," Valerio says. She gradually healed, and in November she and her husband and son drove to D.C. for the race. In many ways it was as much a death march for Valerio as that first agonizing lap around the high-school hockey field. She lurched and sweated and chafed and suffered, running just ahead of the (Continued on page 111)

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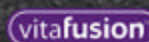
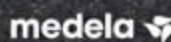


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bus that picked up stragglers who hadn't reached the 14th Street Bridge by the cutoff time. Then at mile 16 she found her second wind; as always she felt stronger the longer she ran. She crossed the finish line in tears, with Rashid and Cito cheering her on.

Shortly afterward she was drawn to trail running and ultras. The longer the better, by Valerio's lights, and she took to the solitude and challenge of the mountains. She also liked the comradeship and spirit of the trail-running community. "My first long trail race, an 18-mile loop course, I was out about nine miles from the start and was suffering," Valerio recalls. "I had blisters, cuts, mosquito bites, you name it. I stood at the side of the trail. I didn't think I could go on. Then a runner came along, an older guy. He asked if I was all right, if I had enough water and gels. He could see I was tired and discouraged, but I wasn't sick or injured. 'Well, it's a long way back to your car and there's only one way to get there,' he said. 'Maybe you better get started.' I love that attitude about trail runners."

Indeed, on both trails and roads, Valerio's detractors form a shrinking minority. "In all the events she's done with us, I haven't

seen anyone be anything but accepting of Mirna," says Rick McNulty, co-director of the New Jersey Trail Series. "In fact, the first race she did with us, she was the one who raised issues. She didn't want to be a burden. She didn't want someone waiting around for hours for her to finish. I assured her it wouldn't be a problem."

Now, other than the morning runs at school, Valerio mostly runs on trails. When she feels weary, or especially inspired, she'll rear back and belt out songs by Luther Vandross or Schubert. "Schubert and the mountains just go together," she says.

She started her *Fat Girl Running* blog in 2011. "I'd go to races and hardly ever see anyone my size," she says. "There were classifications like Athena. But that was for women 165 pounds and up. 165 pounds? They call that big? I wanted to encourage other big women runners, give them information, let them know they're not alone."

Back at the dawn run at Rabun Gap, Valerio gathers the women for the ritual selfie. She looks for the boy she'd met the day before, but he hasn't shown. "No surprise," she says. "I'll keep trying."

The women start their run in darkness. Headlights probe the highway in the valley below campus. They listen to the morning surge of birdsong, and the boom and wash

of distant trucks. Gradually, the mountains take shape against a graying sky. White tufts of fog hang in the hollows.

"I love this time of day," Smith says as they work past the dark high-school dormitory. "The kids are still asleep."

"Not all of them," Valerio says, moving in a stride that at first looks labored but after awhile appears powerful, implacable, her wide hips swinging, her arms pitching rhythmically across her trunk, her feet hitting the pavement steadily and quietly.

"I bet one or two kids are awake and watching us," Valerio says. "Someday, in class, one of them will ask about my running. We'll start talking, I'll tell my story, and some morning soon that girl or boy will be out here running with us." ■

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STEVE SWANSON

NASA ASTRONAUT, 53, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS



“Back on Earth, your body has to relearn how to run. Lifting my legs is much more difficult.”

I DIDN'T RUN much in high school, but afterward, my dad was getting into it. I started to stay in shape and spend time with him.

GETTING OUT on trails helped me enjoy running. I like hiking, so when I put the two together, I realized I could go for hours. I wasn't good at it at first, and I'm still not that fast, but I'm happy.

I'VE FINISHED the 52-mile Bighorn Mountain Wild and Scenic Trail Run in Sheridan, Wyoming, three times. You're taken to the other side of the mountain range and then you run back.

I'VE WORN standard and minimal sneakers. Now I'm in Hoka One One with the big cushions. They're like moon shoes.

● **During his 28-year NASA career, Swanson (shown here at the Johnson Space Center in Houston) has spent 195 days, 15 hours, 41 minutes in space, traveled 83 million miles, and walked in space five times.**

THERE'S A TREADMILL on the International Space Station because exercising is a requirement. It's suggested we work out two hours per day to counteract the loss of bone density and muscle caused by being in space.

ALL THE astronauts run. Michael Hopkins runs fast, hard, and long. And Sunita Williams ran the Boston Marathon up there.

YOU HAVE TO WEAR a harness on the treadmill to hold you down; otherwise you'd float off. We attach a system of bungees and carabiners on both sides, which determines the weight of the harness. That way, you're running with close to your body weight.

BUT RUNNING under your full body weight would be too heavy. Imagine carrying a 190-pound pack. I started out wearing 115 pounds and worked up to 140.

WITHOUT GRAVITY, sweat pools on your skin and it doesn't come off until you wipe it with a towel. If you don't, it just hangs there.

I DID THE 200-MILE Wild West Relay in Colorado twice before on Earth and once in orbit. I ran my legs off it in space, and my five teammates ran the course. Once I got word that it was my turn, I hopped on the treadmill.

I THINK I did 36 miles total. As a team, we completed the 200 miles over 28:56:59.

WHILE WE RACED, the space station orbited 18 times and traveled 500,000 miles.

I LIKE THE BAND Walk the Moon. Their songs "Anna Sun" and "Jenny" really get me going. I know—I had to pick them. 🎧

A black and white photograph of a woman running, captured with significant motion blur to convey speed. She is wearing a light-colored athletic top. A bright yellow diagonal stripe cuts across the lower right portion of the image. The background consists of dark, diagonal, textured bands.

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